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A BOOK OF FABLES

BY

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TO

D. H. LAWRENCE

. . a huge terrible monster, called Moulinavent, who, with four strong arms, waged eternal battle with all their divinities, dexterously turning to avoid their blows, and repay them with interest.

A TALE OF A TUB

CONTENTS

SAMWAYS ISLAND, 1

I TITTIKER, 3
II THE BISHOP, 5
III ARABELLA, 7
IV THE SKITISH NAVY, 10
V CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS, 15
VI HOSTILITIES, 16
VII SIEBENHAAR, 18
VIII MORE OF SIEBENHAAR, 22
IX SIEBENHAAR ON WOMEN, 24
X LOVE, 26
XI MUSIC, 26
XII ADRIFT, 29
XIII HUNGER, 31
XIV MILITARY, 31
XV NAVAL, 37
XVI NATIONAL, 38
XVII REUNION, 41
XVIII BETROTHAL, 42
XIX REACTION, 44
XX HOME, 46

ULTIMUS, 49

I THE SON OF HIS FATHER, 51
II QUESTIONS, 53

III Civilisation, 57
IV War and Women, 62
V Wireless, 65
VI Bich is Obstinate, 67
VII Plans, 72
VIII In Fattish Waters, 74
IX An Afternoon Call, 77
X The Most Beautiful Woman, 80
XI High Politics, 82
XII The Public, 87
XIII The Emperor, 89
XIV War, 93
XV Siebenhaar on Society, 97
XVI Practical Considerations, 98
XVII Peace, 102
XVIII The Return of the Island, 104

GYNECOLOGIA, 107

I History, 109
II Castaway 112
III My Captor, 114
IV The Change, 117
V The Homestead, 121
VI Obsequies, 124
VII Slavery, 127
VIII A Strange Wooing, 128
IX The Ruined City, 130
X The Outlaws, 132
XI Edmund, 135
XII The Nunnery, 138

XIII In the Capital, 142
XIV The Examination, 146
XV Men of Genius, 149
XVI Revolution, 153

Out of Work, 159

I Mr. Bly's Heart Breaks, 161
II Mr. Bly is Imprisoned, 162
III The Dark Gentleman, 163
IV The Dark Gentleman's Story, 165
V Cogitation, 167
VI Conflagration, 167
VII Tib Street, 169
VIII Mr. Bly's Sermon, 171
IX The Effect of Mr. Bly's Sermon, 173
X The Widow Martin, 173
XI Making a Stir, 175
XII Making a Stirabout, 176
XIII Sparks Flying, 177
XIV Smouldering, 178
XV Succour, 178
XVI On the Road, 181
XVII Jah, 183
XVIII Jah Speaks, 185
XIX Song, 186
XX Morning, 187
XXI Hope, 187

PREFACE TO AMERICAN EDITION

PROPHECY of an event is unlikely to be interesting after it and this may be the reason why my prophetic utterances regarding the Great War took the form of Satire. The first of these fables has a history. It was published originally in London as a little orange-covered booklet, called Old Mole's Novel and it was issued simultaneously with Old Mole, a character to whom I was so attached that it gave me great pleasure to attribute authorship to him. Only a small edition was printed and it soon ran out of print. A copy of it reached Germany and fell into the hands of a group of young men who were incensed by the nonsense the high-born Generals and Admirals were talking in the Reichstag and I received enthusiastic letters asking for more so that these caustic prophecies might circulate in Germany and serve as an antidote. That was more encouragement than I had received in England and so, for my German friends, who had the advantage of living under a frank and not a veiled Junkerdom, I composed the remaining fables and finished them a few months before the outbreak of war. The trans-

lation was proceeded with but so far as I know the book was never issued in Germany. It appeared in England early in 1915 and this intensely patriotic effort of mine was condemned as unpatriotic because we had already caught the German trick of talking of war as holy. It sold not at all in its first expensive edition because it was not a novel, nor an essay, nor a play and the British public had no training in Satire, but I have since had letters from both soldiers and conscientious objectors saying that the book was their constant companion and solace, and I have recently learned that in a certain division of the British Army it was declared to be a court-martial offense for any officer to have the book in his possession, presumably on the principle that the soldier must not read anything which his superiors cannot understand. That of course was good for the sale of the book and the cheap edition also ran out of print just about the time when the shortage of paper produced a crisis in the affairs of authors and publishers.

The book was useful to me when the time came as evidence that my objection to war was not an objection to personal discomfort, the element of danger, owing to my ill health, not arising as a point at issue, though that would not have made any difference to my position. My objection to war is that it does not do what its advocates say it does, and

that no good cause can be served by it. Good causes can only be served by patience, endurance, sympathy, understanding, mind and will.

The attempt to remove militarism and military conceptions from among human preoccupations is a good cause and that I will serve with the only weapon I know how to use — the pen, which they say is mightier than the sword or even the howitzer. Having applied myself to this service before the outbreak of the Great War, which for me began in 1911, I was not to be diverted from it by the panic confusion of those who were overtaken by the calamity rather than prepared for it. With Windmills, my essay on Satire, my critical study of Samuel Butler, the Interlude in Old Mole, I was an active participant in the Great War before it began, but of course no one pays any attention to a prophet, especially when he is enough of an artist to desire to give his prophecy permanent form. That indeed was my mistake. Had I thundered in the accents of Horatio Bottomley instead of clipping my sentences to the mocking murmur of satire I might have been a hero to some one else's valet, not having one of my own. Peace has her Bottomleys no less renowned than war, but I am afraid I am not among their number, for I have long since returned to the serious business of life, the composition of dramatic works, and I am in the position that most ensures

unpopularity, that of being able to say 'I told you so.'

I am a little alarmed when I consider how closely the Great War followed my prophecy of it and turn to the fables, Gynecologia and Out of Work, which follow logically from the other. A world governed by women as lopsidedly as it has been by men would be much like that depicted here, and the final collapse, if it came, would surely follow the lines indicated in Out of Work. None of us knows exactly of what we are a portent and who can imagine to what Lady Astor's flight into fame may lead? If I had not already dedicated this book to my friend D. H. Lawrence I would, without her permission, inscribe upon it the name of the first woman to take her Seat in the worst club in London, the House of Commons.

GILBERT CANNAN.

New York, 1919.

Samways Island

I: TITTIKER

GEORGE SAMWAYS awoke one night with a vague distressful feeling that all was not well with his island. The moon was shining, but it was casting the shadow of the palm tree in which he slept over the hollow wherein he cooked his meals, and that had never happened before.

He was alarmed and climbed down his palm tree and ran to the tall hill from which he was accustomed to observe the sea and the land that floated blue on the edge of the sea. The ascent seemed longer than usual, and when he reached the summit he was horrified to find a still higher peak before him. At this sight he was overcome with emotion and lay upon the earth and sobbed. When he could sob no more he rose to his feet and dragged himself to the top of the furthest peak and gazed out upon an empty sea. The moon was very bright. There was no land upon the edge of the sea. He raised his eyes heavenwards. The stars were moving. He looked round upon his island. It was shrunk, and the forests were uprooted and the little lake at the foot of the hill had disappeared. Before and behind his island the sea was churned and tumbled, as

it was when he pressed his hands against the little waves when he went into the water to cleanse himself.

And now a wind came and a storm arose; rain came beating, and he hastened back to the hole in the ground he had dug for himself against foul weather. Then, knowing that he would not sleep, he lit his lamp of turtle oil and pith and read *Tittiker.*

Tittiker was the book left to him by his father whom he had put into the ground many years before, even as he had seen his father do with his mother when he was a little child. He had been born on the island, and could just remember his mother, and his father had lived long enough to teach him how to fish and hunt and make his clothes of leaves, feathers, and skins, and to read in *Tittiker,* but not long enough to give him any clue to the meaning of the book. But whenever he was sad it was a great solace to him, and he had read it from cover to cover forty times, for it was like talking to somebody else, and it was full of names and titles, to which he had attached personages, so that the island was very thickly populated. Through *Tittiker* he knew that the earth moved round the sun, that the moon moved round the earth and made the tides, that there were three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, seven days in the week, and that

printing is the art of producing impressions from characters or figures.

II: THE BISHOP

WHEN, the next morning, he crawled out of his lair he saw a man strangely clad in black, with a shiny corded hat on his head and an apron hanging from his middle to his knees, gazing up into his palm tree and down into his kitchen. The man in black saw him and, in the language of *Tittiker,* said:

"Alas, my poor brother!"

"Are you my brother?" asked George.

The man in black stepped back in amazement.

"You speak Fattish?" he cried.

"I have had no one to speak to for many years," replied George; "but my father spoke as you do."

"Let us pray," said the man in black, kneeling down on the sands.

"Pray? What is that?"

"To God. Surely you are acquainted with the nature of God?"

The word occurred in *Tittiker.*

"I often wondered what it was," said George.

"Ssh!" said the man in black soothingly. "See! I will tell you. God made the world in six days and rested the seventh day. . . ."

"It took me nearly six days to dig my father's grave, and then I was very tired."

"Ssh! Ssh! Listen. . . . God made the world in six days, and last of all he made man and set him to live in his nakedness and innocence by the sweat of his brow. But man ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and became acquainted with original sin in the form of a serpent, and his descendants were born, lived and died in wickedness and were reduced to so terrible a plight that God in His mercy sent His son to point the way to salvation. God's son was crucified by the Jews, was wedded to the Church, and, leaving His bride to carry His name all over the world and bring lost sheep home to the fold, ascended into Heaven. But first He descended into Hell to show that the soul might be saved even after damnation, and He rose again the third day. His Church, after many vicissitudes, reached the faithful people of Fatland, which for all it is a little island off the continent of Europe, has created the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. The Fattish people have been favoured with the only true Church, whose officers and appointed ministers are deacons, priests, rural deans, prebendaries, canons, archdeacons, deans, bishops, archbishops. I am a Bishop."

"All that," said George, "is in *Tittiker.*"

And he recited the names and salaries of six dio-

ceses, but when he came to the seventh the Bishop blushed and bade him forbear.

"That," he said, "is my diocese." And he swelled out and looked down his nose and made George feel very uncomfortable, so that to bridge the difficulty he went back to the Bishop's story.

"I like that," he said. "And Hell is such a good word. I never heard it before."

"Hell," replied the Bishop, "is the place of damnation."

"Ah! my father used to say 'damnation.'"

"Ssh!"

"There is something about Jews in *Tittiker*, but what is original sin?"

The Bishop looked anxiously from left to right and from right to left and in a very low, earnest voice he said:

"Are there no women on your island?"

III: ARABELLA

EVEN as the Bishop spoke there came round the point a creature than whom George had not even dreamed of any more fair. But her garments seemed to him absurd, because they clung about her nether limbs so as to impede their action. She came with little steps toward them, crying:

"Father!"

"My child! Not dead!"

"No, dear father. I have been drying myself over there. I have been weeping for you. I thought I was the only one saved."

"So I thought of myself. What a wonderful young woman you are! You look as if you were going district visiting, so neat you are."

George was staring at her with all his eyes. Never had he heard more lovely sounds than those that came from her lips.

"My daughter, Arabella," said the Bishop.

She held out her hand. George touched it fearfully as though he dreaded lest she should melt away.

"I like you," he said.

"I'm so hungry," cried Arabella.

"I could eat an ox," declared the Bishop.

George produced a kind of bread that he made from seeds, and the leg of a goat, and went off to the creek near by to fetch some clams. He also caught a crab and they had a very hearty breakfast, washed down with the milk of cocoanuts. The Bishop had explained the situation to Arabella, and she said:

"And am I really the first woman you have ever seen!"

"I had a mother," replied George simply, "But

she was not beautiful like you. She dressed differently and her legs were fat and strong."

"There, there!" said the Bishop. But Arabella laughed merrily.

The Bishop told how they had been with nineteen other Bishops and their families upon a cruise in the steam-yacht *Oyster,* each Bishop engaging to preach on Sundays to the lay passengers, and how the propeller had been broken and they had been carried out of their course and tossed this way and that, and finally wrecked (he thought) with the loss of all hands, though the wireless operator had stuck to his post to the last and managed to get off the tidings of the calamity with latitude and longitude into the air.

It all conveyed very little to George, but it was an acute pleasure to him to hear their voices, and as they talked he looked from one to the other with a happy, friendly smile.

He was very proud to show his island to his visitors, but distressed at the havoc wrought by the storm, and he apologised for its unusual behaviour in moving.

"It has never done it before," he explained, and was rather hurt because Arabella laughed.

He showed them where, as far as he could remember, his father and mother lay buried, and he took them to the top of the hill, and to amuse them

caught a goat and a little kind of kangaroo there was in the forest, and a turtle. He displayed his hammock in the palm tree and showed how he curled up in it and wedged himself in so as not to fall out, and promised to prepare two other trees for them. They demurred. The Bishop asked if he might have the lair, and Arabella asked George to build her a house. He did not know what a house was, but looked it up in *Tittiker* and could find mention only of the House of Swells and the House of Talk. Arabella made a little house of sand; he caught the idea and spent the day weaving her a cabin of palm branches and mud and pebbles. He sang whole passages from *Tittiker* as he worked, and when it was finished he led Arabella to the cabin and she smiled so dazzlingly that he reeled, but quickly recovered himself, remembered as in a vision how it had been with his mother, flung his arms round her neck and kissed her, saying:

"I love you."

"I think we had better look for my father," said Arabella.

IV: THE SKITISH NAVY

FOR three nights did the Bishop sleep in the lair and Arabella in her cabin. A grey scrub grew on the

Bishop's chin, and during the daytime he instructed George solemnly and heavily as he delivered himself of his invariable confirmation address, — (on the second day he baptised George in the creek, and Arabella was delighted to be his god-mother) — with an eager pride as he told him of the Skitish Isles where his diocese and the seat of the Empire lay. The United Kingdom, he said, consisted of four countries, Fatland, Smugland, Bareland, and Snales, but only Fatland mattered, because the Fattish absorbed the best of the Smugs and the Barish and the Snelsh and found jobs for the cleverest of them in Bondon or Buntown, which was the greatest city in the world. He assured George that he might go down on his knees and thank God — now that he was baptised — for having been born a Fattishman, and that if they ever returned to Bondon he would receive a reward for having added to the Skitish Empire.

George knew all about the Emperor-King and his family, and liked the idea of giving his island as a present. He asked the Bishop if he thought the Emperor-King would give him Arabella.

"That," said the Bishop, "does not rest with the Emperor-King."

"But I want her," answered George.

Thereafter the Bishop was careful never to leave his daughter alone, so that at last she protested and

hum, ha! — All's well that ends well and it was extremely fortunate.

Arabella said that Mr. Samways was not only a Skitish subject but a member of the Church of Fatland, and would be only too pleased to hand over his island to the Colonial or whatever office might desire to govern it. Mr. Samways was, so far, the island's whole permanent population and would gladly give all particulars. For herself she was only anxious to return to Fatland, and was excited at the prospect of travelling on board one of the Emperor-King's ships of war. Meanwhile would Mr. ——

"Bich."

—would Mr. Bich stay to luncheon?

Mr. Bich stayed to luncheon. In the afternoon he made a rough survey of the island, sounded the surrounding waters, declared that movement had ceased, and that so far as he could make out the island was fast on a submarine reef, with which it had collided so violently that a promontory had cracked and was even now sinking, and with it the *Oyster*.

Careful examination of the shore on that side of the island revealed no more than the bodies of two Lascars, two nailbrushes, a corded silk hat, a Bible, a keg of rum and five tins of condensed milk. In that awful shipwreck had perished nineteen Bishops and their families, a hundred and ten members of

the professional and trading classes, the crew, the captain, mates, and a cat.

They stood there on that wild shore amid the solitude of sea and sky, the Skitish officer, the Bishop, Arabella, and George Samways, and their emotions were too deep for words.

V: CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS

THE ship lay-to, and, while the Captain and Mr. Bich discussed the island in the language of their trade, the Bishop, whenever possible, preached a sermon, or discoursed on the beauties of nature; but Arabella took George under her protection, had his hair cut and his beard shaved, and with a smile bought of the youngest sub-lieutenant a suit of his shore-going clothes, a set of shirts, collars, and all necessary under-garments. George found them most uncomfortable, but bore with them for her sake.

As the result of the eloquence of Mr. Bich the Captain went ashore and returned to report that, the promontory now having sunk to the depths of the ocean, a very decent harbour had been made and the island would be valuable to the Empire as a coaling-station. His pockets were bulging when he came aboard, and Arabella elicited from Mr. Bich that

the island was rich in precious stones and metals, and that the pebbles of which her cabin had been built were emeralds and aquamarines such as had never before been seen. Arabella told her father, and he bade her say nothing, adding impressively:

"We must protect Mr. Samways' interests."

But George was thinking of nothing but the best means of obliterating Mr. Bich, upon whom it seemed to him that Arabella was casting a too favourable eye.

VI: HOSTILITIES

As the ship steamed away from the island the smoke of another vessel was sighted. It was signalled, but no reply was hoisted. There was great excitement on board and the chief gunner said:

"Let me have a go at them."

The Captain stood upon the bridge, a figure of calm dignity with a telescope to his eye. Mr. Bich explained to Arabella and George that the ship was a Fatter ship, and that the Fatters had lately been taking islands on the sly without saying anything to anybody, because they were jealous of the Skitish Empire and wanted to have one too.

"Do islands make an Empire?" asked George.

"Anything you can get," replied Mr. Bich.

The Fatter ship was making for the island. After her went the grey vessel, and it was a nose-to-nose race who should first reach the harbour. The Fatter ship won. The grey vessel fired a gun. The gig was lowered and the Captain, looking very grim and determined, put off in her. . . . Arabella dropped a pin and it was heard all over the vessel. It was a relief to all on board when the Bishop knelt and offered up a prayer for the Captain's safety. The Amen that came at the end of it brought the tears to George's eyes, and his blood ran cold when it swelled into a cheer as the Captain's gig broke loose from the Fatter ship and came tearing over the smooth waters.

The Captain's face was very white as he stepped on deck and called Mr. Bich and the other officers to his state-room, and whiter still were the faces of Mr. Bich and the officers when they left it. The vessel shook with the vibration of the engines: there was a strange and stormy muttering among the men: the vessel headed for the open sea. George was taken to his cabin and locked in. He lay down on the floor and tried to go to sleep. A roaring and a rumbling and a banging and a thudding made that impossible. The shaking made him feel so sick that he wished to die. Near by he could hear Arabella weeping, and that was more than he could bear. He thrust and bumped against his door and worked

himself into a sweat over it, but it seemed that it would not give. As he reached the very pit of despair, the door gave, the floor gave, the walls heaved in upon him; in one roaring convulsion he was flung up and up and up, and presently came down and down and down into the sea. It tasted salt and was cool to his sweating body and he was glad of it.

VII: SIEBENHAAR

He was not glad of it for long, because he soon became very cold and was nipped to numbness. He assumed that it was the end, and felt a remote regret for Arabella. Other thought he had none.

When he came to himself he was, or seemed to be, once more in the room from which he had been so violently propelled, but there were two men standing near him and talking in a strange tongue. Presently there came a third man who spoke to him in Fattish.

"Hullo! Thought you were done in," said the man.

George stared.

"Done in. Dead."

"Yes, I was."

The man laughed.

"Funny fellow you are. Eyes just like a baby."

"Where is Arabella?" asked George. "Where am I?"

"Give you three guesses," said the man.

"On a ship?"

"Right."

"The Emperor-King's ship?"

"No. The King-Emperor's. You have the honour to be the first prisoner in the great Fattero-Fattish war."

"War? What is that?"

"War? You don't know what war is? Have you never read a newspaper?"

"I have only read *Tittiker*. It tells about a War Office, but I never knew what it was for."

"My name's Siebenhaar, engineer and philosophical student, and I fancy you are the man I have been looking for all my life. You should be capable of a pure idea. . . ."

"What," asked George, "is an idea?"

Siebenhaar flung his arms around him and embraced him and recited a long poem in his own language.

"You shall be presented at the Universities!" he said. "You shall be a living reproach to all writers, thinkers, artists, and I, Siebenhaar, will be your humble attendant."

"Did I say anything unusual?"

"Unusual? Unique! Colossal! The ultimate

question! 'What is war? What is an idea?' Ach?"

George insisted on an explanation of the meaning of war, and then he asked why the Fattish and the Fatters should be intent upon mutual destruction, and also what the difference between them might be.

"Difference?" said Siebenhaar. "The Fattish drink beer that you can hold; the Fatters drink beer that runs through you. That is all there is to it."

With that he sent for some Fatter beer and drank a large quantity himself and made George taste it. He spat it out.

"Is that why they are making war?"

Siebenhaar smacked his lips.

"Man," he said, "is the creature of his internal organs, almost, I might say, their slave. The lungs, the heart, the kidneys, the stomach, the bladder, these control a man, and every day refashion him. If they do their work well, so does he. If they do it ill, then so does he. Each of the organs has secretions which periodically choke their interaction, and bring about a state of ill-humour and discomfort in which the difference between man and man is accentuated, and their good relations degenerate into hatred and envy and distrust. At such times murders are committed and horrible assaults, but frequently discretion prevails over those desires, suppresses them but does not destroy them. They

accumulate and find expression in war, which has been led up to by a series of actions on the part of men suffering from some internal congestion. Modern war, they say, is made by money, and the lust for it. That is no explanation. No man becomes a victim of the lust for money except something interferes with his more natural lusts: no man, I go so far as to say, could so desire money as to become a millionaire except he were const——"

"But what has this to do with beer?" interrupted George.

"I'm coming to that," continued Siebenhaar.

"Beer taken in excess is a great getter of secretions, and man is so vain an animal as to despise those whose secretions differ from his own. What is more obvious than that the implacable enemies of the Eastern hemisphere should be those whose drink is so much the same but so profoundly different in its effects? Internal congestion may bring about war, but in this war the material is undoubtedly supplied by beer. And I may add, in support of my theory, that once war is embarked upon, those engaged in it suffer so terribly from internal disorganisation as to become unanswerable for their actions, and so mad as to rejoice in the near prospect of a violent death. Moltke was notoriously decayed inside and the state of Napoleon's internal organs will not bear thinking on."

George protested that he had never heard of Napoleon or Moltke, and Siebenhaar was on the point of embracing him, when, muttering something about Fatter beer, he rose abruptly and left the room.

VIII: MORE OF SIEBENHAAR

"THERE is a woman aboard," said Siebenhaar when he returned. "I suppose you have never seen a woman?"

"Two," said George simply.

Siebenhaar slapped his leg.

"Have you any theory about them?" he asked.

"Theory? I don't know what theory is. I loved them. I put my arms round their necks and rubbed my face against their soft faces. It was very nice. I should like to do it every night before I go to sleep. I should like to do it now."

"You shall," said Siebenhaar, and he went out and came back with Arabella.

George leaped from his berth and flung his arms round her neck and embraced her, and she was so surprised and delighted that she kissed him, and Siebenhaar wept to see it.

"I don't know who you are, madam," he said, "but if I were you I should stick to that young man

like a barnacle to a ship's bottom. I would creep into his heart and curl up in it like a grub in a ripe raspberry, and I would go down on my knees and thank Heaven for having sent me the one man in the modern world who may be capable of a genuine and constant affection. You have him, madam, straight from his mother's arms, with a soul, a heart, as virgin as I hope your own are."

Arabella disengaged herself from George's now ardent embrace, drew herself up, and with the haughtiness of her race, said:

"My father was a bishop of the Church of Fatland."

"That," said Siebenhaar, "does not exempt you from the normal internal economy of your sex or its need of the (perfectly honest) love of the opposite sex. My point is that you have here an unrivalled opportunity of meeting an honest love, and I implore you to take it."

"I would have you know," retorted Arabella, "that I am engaged to my late father's chaplain."

"War," said Siebenhaar, "is war, and I should advise you to seek protection where it is offered."

"If you would hold my hand in yours," said George to Arabella, "I think I should sleep now. I am so tired."

Arabella held George's hand and in two minutes he was asleep.

IX: SIEBENHAAR ON WOMEN

"THERE are some," said Siebenhaar, "who regard women as a disease, a kind of fungoid distortion of the human form. But only the very lowest species are hermaphrodite, and the higher seem to be split up into male and female for the purpose of reproduction without temporary loss of efficiency in the task of procuring food. The share of the male in the act of reproduction is soon over, and among the wisest inhabitants of the globe the male is destroyed as soon as his share is performed. Human beings are not very wise: they have an exaggerated idea of their importance; and they are reluctant to destroy the life of their kind except in occasional outbursts of organised homicide such as that on which we are now engaged. The share of the female entails the devotion of many months, during which she needs the protection of the male, whom, for that reason, and also because she hopes to repeat the performance, she retains by every art at her disposal. Hence has arisen the institution of marriage, which pledges the male to the protection of the female and their offspring. Whether a moral principle is engaged in this institution is a question upon which philosophers cannot agree. It is therefore left out of most systems of philosophy. Mine is based on

my answer to it, which is that there is no moral principle engaged. Morality is for the few who are capable of it. Few men have the capacity for ideas, but all men love women, except a few miserable degenerates, who prefer a substitute. There is no idea in marriage. It is an expedient. Sensible communities admit of open relief from it; in duller communities relief has to be sought in the byways. And still no moral principle is engaged. It is a matter only of supplying the necessities of human nature. Now, love is a different affair altogether. Love is an idea, a direct inspiration. It alone can transcend the tyranny of the internal organs and lead a man not only to perceive his limitations but within them to create beauty, and creative a man must be directly he becomes aware of the heat of love in the heart of a woman. There is no other such purging fire, none that can so illuminate the dark places of the world or so concentrate and distil such lightness as there is. All evil, I have said, comes from congestion; to release the good a purge is necessary, and there is no purge like woman. Therefore, madam, I do most solemnly charge you to tend the fire of love in your heart. Never again will you find a man so sensible to its warmth — (most men can see no difference between love and indigestion) — Oh, madam, discard all thoughts of marriage, which is an expedient of prudence, which is cowardice, of

modesty, which is a lure, of innocence, which in an adult female is a lie, to the winds, do exactly as you feel inclined to do, and love. Madam ——"

But by this Arabella was asleep. She had sunk back against George, her lovely tresses lay upon his shoulder, and her hand clasped his.

Siebenhaar wiped away a tear, heaved a great sigh, took his beer-mug in his hand and crept away on tip-toe.

X: LOVE

XI: MUSIC

On deck was a band playing dirge-like dragging hymns, for the Admiral of that ship was a very pious man and believed that the Almighty was personally directing the war against the enemies of Fatterland, and would be encouraged to hear that ship's company taking him seriously.

No sooner did Siebenhaar set foot on deck than he was arrested.

The Chaplain had listened to every word of his discourse and reported it to the Admiral, who detested Siebenhaar because he was always laughing

and was very popular with the crew. Word for word the Chaplain had quoted Siebenhaar's sayings, so that he could deny nothing but only protest that it was purely a private matter, a series of opinions and advice given gratuitously to an interesting couple.

"Nothing," roared the Admiral, "is given to the enemies of our country."

"We are all human," said Siebenhaar. "I was carried away by the discovery of human feeling amid the callousness of this pompous war."

The Admiral went pale. The Chaplain shuddered. The officers hid their faces.

"He has spoken against God's holy war," said the Chaplain.

"That's all my eye," said Siebenhaar. "Why drag God into it? You are making war simply because you have so many ships that you are ashamed not to use them. The armament companies want to build more ships and can invent no other way of getting rid of them."

"God has given us ships of war," said the Chaplain, "even as He has given us the good grain and the fish of the sea. Who are we that we should not use them?"

The sub-Chaplain had been sent to discover the effect of Siebenhaar's advice upon the enemies of Fatterland. The accused had just opened his mouth

to resume his defence when the sub-Chaplain returned and whispered into the ear of his chief.

"God help us all!" cried the Chaplain. "They are desecrating His ship!"

There was a whispered consultation. George and Arabella were brought before the court, and if George was the object of general execration, Arabella won the admiration of all eyes, especially the Admiral's, who regarded his affections as his own particular, private and peculiar devil and was now tempted by him. The Chaplain held forth at great length; the Admiral grunted in apostrophe. Only Siebenhaar could interpret. He said:

"They say we have blasphemed their God of War. I by giving advice, you by acting on it. It is not good to be fortunate and favoured among hundreds of mateless males. It will go hard with us."

"And Arabella?" asked George.

"They will keep Arabella," replied Siebenhaar.

They were silenced.

A boat was stocked with corned beef, biscuits, and water. George and Siebenhaar were placed in it and it was lowered. The band resumed its playing of dirge-like dragging hymns, and through the wailing of the oboes and the cornet-à-piston George could hear the sobs of Arabella.

XII: ADRIFT

"Now," said Siebenhaar, "you have an opportunity to exercise your national prerogative and rule the waves."

George made no reply. His internal organs were supplying him with an illustration of Siebenhaar's theory. The waves did just as they liked with the boat, sent it spinning in one direction, wrenched it back in another, slipped from under it, picked it up again and every now and then playfully sent a drenching spray over its occupants.

Siebenhaar talked, sang and slept, and, when he was doing none of these things, ate voraciously.

"I insist on dying with a full stomach," he said when George protested.

George ate and slept and thought of Arabella, when he could think at all.

"Death," said Siebenhaar, "must be very surprising: but then, so is life when you penetrate its disguises and discover its immutability. We hate death only because it is impossible to pretend that it is something else, so that it comes at the end of the comedy to give us the lie. After this experience I think I shall change my philosophy and seek the truth of life with the light of death. You never know: it might become fashionable. Women like

their thoughts ready-made, and they like them bizarre. Women are undoubtedly superior to men. . . ."

But by this time George was in such a state of discomfort that he lay flat on his face in the bottom of the boat and groaned:

"I am going to die."

"Eat," said Siebenhaar, "eat and drink." And he offered corned beef and water.

"I want to die," moaned George, and he wept because death would not come at once. He hid his face in his hands and howled and roared. Siebenhaar himself ate the corned beef and drank the water, and went on eating and drinking until he had exhausted all their supply. Then he curled up in the bows and went to sleep and snored.

And the waves changed their mood and gave the boat only a gentle rocking.

George opened his eyes and gazed up into the sky. It was night and the stars were shining brilliantly. Red and yellow and white they were and they danced above him. He was astonished to find that he did not wish to die. He was very hungry. He crawled over to Siebenhaar and shook him and woke him up.

There was neither food nor water in the locker.

"In the great cities of the civilised world," said Siebenhaar, "there are occasional performers who go without food for forty days. We shall see."

"I am thirsty," whimpered George.

"Those occasional performers," returned Siebenhaar, "drink water and smoke cigarettes, and they are sheltered from the elements by walls of glass. We shall see."

With that he turned over and went to sleep again.

XIII: HUNGER

GEORGE'S face was sunk and his eyes glared. Siebenhaar tried to spit into the sea, but it was impossible. He was daunted into silence.

Another day began to dawn.

"If this goes on," said George in a dry whistling croak of a voice, "I shall eat you."

And he glared so at Siebenhaar's throat that the philosopher turned up his coat collar to cover it.

XIV: MILITARY

AT dawn a shower of rain came. They collected water in George's boots. They had already eaten Siebenhaar's.

Thus revived, George stood up, and on the edge of the sea saw blue land and little white sails. They came nearer and nearer, and presently they were de-

livered by a little vessel that contained one white man and ten negroes. Neither George nor Siebenhaar could speak, but they pointed to their bellies and were given to eat.

"I recant," said Siebenhaar. "There is nothing to be learnt from death, for death is nothing. The stomach is lord of life and master of the world."

With that he recounted their adventures and the reason for their being in such a woeful plight. The master of the ship, on learning that Siebenhaar was a Fatter, said that he must deliver him up as a prisoner when they reached Cecilia, the capital of the Fattish colony which they would see as soon as the fleet — for it was a fishing fleet — turned into the bay.

"As a Philosopher," said Siebenhaar, "I have no nationality. As an engineer — but I am no longer an engineer. The Admiral and the Chaplain will have seen to that. My life is now devoted to Mr. Samways, as in a certain narrower sense it has nearly been." And he told the master of the ship how George was by birth the proprietor of the island in dispute between the two nations, and how the island shone with precious stones and glittered with a mountain of gold. The master's cupidity was aroused, and he agreed to grant Siebenhaar his liberty on the promise of a rich reward at the conclusion of the war. He was a Fattishman, and could

not believe that there would be any other end than a Fattish triumph.

A pact was signed and they sailed into Cecilia, the governor of which colony was Siebenhaar's cousin and delighted to see him and to have a chance of talking the Fatter language and indulging in philosophical speculations for which his Fattish colleagues had no taste. He welcomed George warmly on his first entry in a civilised land, and was delighted to instruct him in the refinements of Fattish manners: how you did not eat peas or gravy with your knife, and how (roughly speaking) no portion of the body between the knees and shoulders might be mentioned in polite society, and how sneezing and coughing and the like sudden affections were to be checked or disguised. George talked of Arabella and the wonderful stir of the emotions she had caused in him. Colonel Sir Gerard Schweinfleisch (for that was his name) was greatly shocked, and told how in the best Fattish society all talk of love was forbidden, left by the men to the women, and how among men the emotions were never discussed, and how, since it was impossible to avoid all mention of that side of life, men in civilisation had invented a system of droll stories which both provided amusement and put a stop to the embarrassment of intimate revelations.

However, as George's vigour was restored by the good food he ate in enormous quantities, he could

not forbear to think of Arabella or to talk of her. He spoke quite simply of her to a company of officers, and they roared with laughter and found it was the best story they had ever heard.

When the officers were not telling droll stories, they were playing cards or ball games or boasting one against the other or talking about money.

George asked what money was, and they showed him some. He was disappointed. He had expected something much more remarkable because they had been so excited about it. They told him he must have money, and Colonel Sir Gerard Schweinfleisch gave him a sovereign. A man in the street asked George to lend him a sovereign and George gave it to him. The officers were highly amused.

The adventurers had not been in Cecilia above a week when the town was besieged and presently bombarded. Except that there was a shortage of food and that every day at least thirty persons were killed, there was no change in the life of the place. The officers told droll stories and played cards or ball games or boasted one against the other or talked about money. They ate, drank, slept, and quarrelled, and George found them not so very much unlike himself except that he was serious about his love for Arabella, while they laughed. He asked Siebenhaar what civilisation was. Said the philosopher with a wave of his hand:

"They have built a lot of houses."

"But the ships out there are knocking them down."

"They have made railways from one town to another."

"But the black men have torn the railways up." (For the native tribes had risen.)

Said Siebenhaar:

"No one can define civilisation. It means doing things."

"Why?"

"Thou art the greatest of men," replied Siebenhaar, and his face beamed approbation and love upon his friend. But to put an unanswerable question to Siebenhaar was to set him off on his theories.

"First," he said, "the stomach must be fed. Two men working together can procure more food than two men working separately. That is as far as we have got. Until the two men trust each other we are not likely to get any further. Until then they will steal each other's tools, goods, women, and squabble over the proceeds of their work and make the world a hell for the young. When one man steals or murders it is a crime: when forty million men steal, murder, rape, burn, destroy, pillage, sack, oppress, they are making glorious history, a lot of money, and, if they like to call it so, an Empire. But Empire and petty thefts are both occasioned by

the lamentable distrust of the two men of our postulate."

"But for Arabella," said George, "I could wish I had never left my island."

News of the war came dribbling in. The island had been twice captured by the Fatter fleet, and twice it had been evacuated. The Fatters had suffered defeat in their home waters but had gained a victory in the Indian seas. Came news that the island had again been captured, then the tidings that the whole of the Fatter fleet and army was to be concentrated upon Cecilia and the colony of which it was the capital.

"Why?" asked George.

"Because a new reef of gold has been discovered up-country."

The bombardment grew very fierce. From the mountain above the town ships of war could be seen coming from all directions, and some of them were Fattish ships, but not enough as yet to come to grips with the Fatter fleet.

The inland frontiers were attacked but held, though with frightful loss of life. Then one night from the Fatter fleet came a landing party, and Colonel Sir Gerard Schweinfleisch called a council of war, and the officers sat from ten o'clock until three in the morning debating what had best be done.

At half-past one the landing party were only a

mile away. A shell burst in the street as George was walking to his lodging and three men were killed in front of him. It was the first time he had seen such a thing. It froze his blood. He gave a yell that roused the whole town, ran, was followed by a crowd of riff-raff seizing weapons as they went, and rushed down upon the enemy, who had stopped for a moment to see two dogs fighting in the road. They were taken by surprise and utterly routed.

There is no more rousing episode in the whole military history of Fatland. George was for three days the hero of the Empire. He received by wireless telegraphy countless offers of marriage, ten proposals from music-hall engagements, and by cable a demand for the story of the fight from the noble proprietor of a Sunday newspaper. It was impossible to persuade that noble proprietor that there was no extant photograph of Mr. Samways, and a fortune was spent in cablegrams in the fruitless attempts to do so.

XV: NAVAL

As it turned out the concentration on Cecilia was a fatal tactical error, directly traceable to the King-Emperor, who had never left the capital of Fatterland and had been misled by certain telegrams which had been wrongly deciphered. The entire Fattish

navy was collected upon the bombarding fleet and utterly destroyed it.

George and Siebenhaar watched the engagement from the mountain above Cecilia. It was almost humorous to see the huge vessels curtsey to the water and so disappear. It was astonishing to see the Fattish admiral surround nine of his own vessels and cause them also to curtsey and disappear.

"What in hell," said George, who had by now learned the nature of an oath, "what in hell is he doing that for?"

"That," said Siebenhaar, "is for the benefit of the armament contractors. A war without loss of ships is no use to them."

And suddenly George burst into tears, because he had thought of all the men on board, and was overcome with the futility of it all and the feeling that he was partially to blame for having been born on his island.

XVI: NATIONAL

THE Fattish are an emotional race. They had overcome the Fatters, and the only outstanding hero of that war was George. They insisted on seeing George. They clamoured for him. They sent a cruiser to fetch him from Cecilia, and the com-

mander of that cruiser was none other than Mr. Bich, who had won promotion.

His astonishment was no less great than George's, but his adventures were less interesting. After the destruction of the ship he had been saved by a turtle which had been attracted by his brass buttons and had allowed him to ride on his back so long as they lasted. He had had to give it one every twenty minutes, and had just come to his last when he was seen and rescued. He had thought himself the only survivor, and when he heard that Arabella also had been delivered from the waves there came into his eye a gleam which George did not like.

The voyage was quite monotonously uneventful and George was glad when they reached Fatland. The Mayor, Corporation, and Citizens, also dogs and children, of the port at which he landed, turned out to meet him; he was given the freedom of the borough, and a banquet, and at both ceremony and meal he was photographed.

In Bondon he was given five public meals in two days. He was so bewildered by the number of people who thronged round him that he left all arrangements in Siebenhaar's hands, and Siebenhaar liked the banquets.

He was received by the Emperor-King and decorated, and the Empress-Queen said: "How do you do, Mr. Samways?"

He was followed everywhere by enormous crowds, and outside his lodgings there were always ten policemen to clear a way for the traffic. His romantic history had put a polish on his fame: the motherless and fatherless orphan, all those years alone upon an island; no woman in Fatland old or young, rich or poor, but yearned to be a mother to him and make up to him for all those years. And then the wonderful story of his acceptance of the Fattish religion, his reception on those golden sands into the church at the hands of the good Bishop of Bygn, after the appalling disaster to the *Oyster*. All was known, and the emotional Fattish found it irresistibly moving. George in all innocence created a religious revival such as had never been known. The theatres, music-halls, picture palaces were deserted: no crowds attended the football matches or the race-meetings, and when the newspapers had exhausted the Story of George Samways their circulation dropped to next to nothing. The situation for certain trades looked black indeed.

But of all of this George recked nothing. His one thought was for Arabella.

XVII: REUNION

SIEBENHAAR took a malicious delight in the ruin of the newspaper trade, and pledged George to attend a mammoth church meeting in Bondon's greatest hall of assembly. There were forty bishops on the platform, and a Duke presided. George entered. There were tears, cheers, sobs, sighs, groans, conversions; and hundreds suddenly became conscious of salvation, swooned away and were carried out.

The Duke spoke for fifty minutes. Mr. Samways (he said) would now tell the story of his —er—er—

"Have I got to say something?" said George to Siebenhaar.

"Tell them," said Siebenhaar, "to look after the stomach and the rest will look out for itself."

George advanced toward the front of the platform and beamed out upon the eager audience.

Arabella let a pin drop and it could be heard all over the hall.

It *was* Arabella! For a moment George could not believe his eyes. It was she! He leaped down from the platform, took her in his arms and covered her with kisses.

So strong was the hypnotic power of his fame that there was no male in that huge audience but followed his example, no female, old or young, rich or poor,

but yielded to it. In vain did the bishops protest and quote from the marriage service of the Fattish Church; in vain did they go among the audience and earnestly implore the individual members of it to desist. They replied that George Samways had revealed a new religion and that they liked it.

And above the tumult rose the voice of Siebenhaar saying: —— But what he said is unprintable.

XVIII: BETROTHAL

How he escaped from the pandemonium George never knew, but his first clear recollection after it was of being borne swiftly through the streets of Bondon with Arabella in his arms, she weeping and telling him of the hard and vile usage she had been put to on the Fatter ship, for the Admiral was a horrid man. She told him how she had at last been taken to the Fatterland and there, by her father's influence — (for her father also had been marvelously delivered from an untimely end) — released and sent, first-class at the expense of the Fatter Government, home to Fatland, and how she had there resumed her old life of district visiting and tea parties and diocesan conferences and rescuing white slaves and had been content in it until she had seen him, when all her old love had sprung once more into flame and she

would never, never desert him more. George wept also and protested that he would never leave her side.

She took him to her home, and her father, who had been prevented by indisposition from attending the meeting, blessed him and made him welcome.

It was very late and George drew Arabella to his side and said he would send for his things.

"Things!" said the Bishop.

"We love each other," replied George.

"Do you propose to marry this man?" asked the Bishop.

Arabella blushed and explained to George that he must go away until they were married, and the Bishop revealed the meaning of the word.

"But why?" asked George.

"It is so ordained," said the Bishop, and George was exasperated.

"I love Arabella," he cried. "What more do you want? And what on earth has it got to do with you or anybody else? I love Arabella, and my love has survived shipwreck, starvation, explosion, battle, murder, and the public festivities of Fatland. . . ."

With extraordinary cynicism the Bishop replied:

"That may be. But it is doubtful if it will survive marriage; therefore marriage is necessary."

This illogical argument silenced George. The Bishop finally gave his consent and the marriage was

arranged to take place in a month's time, and the announcement of the betrothal was sent to the only remaining morning newspaper.

XIX: REACTION

THERE were great rejoicings when peace between Fatland and Fatterland was signed and ratified, and the day was set apart for an imposing ceremony at the Colonial Office, when George's island was to be solemnly incorporated in the Empire.

In a little room high up in the huge offices Field-Marshals, Admirals, and Cabinet Ministers foregathered. The State Map of the World was produced and the island was marked on it, and George with his own hand was to have the privilege of underlining its name in red ink. It was an awful moment. George dipped his pen in the ink—(it was the first time he had ever held a pen in his hand and he had to be instructed in its use); he dipped his pen in the ink, held it poised above the map, when the door opened and a white-faced clerk rushed in with a sheet of paper as white as his face. This he gave to the Colonial Secretary, who collapsed. The Lord High Flunkey took the paper and said:

"Good God!"

George dropped the pen and made a red blot on the State Map of the World.

The Lord High Flunkey pulled himself together and said:

"My Lords and Gentlemen, the South Seas Squadron commissioned to annex the new island reports that it has moved on and cannot be found."

"This is a serious matter, Mr. Samways," said the senior Admiral.

"I'm awfully sorry," answered George, and he walked out of the room.

It had been arranged that when George underlined the name of his island on the map, the national flag should be run up on the offices so that the expectant crowd should know that the Empire had been enlarged and the war justified. There was an appalling silence as George left the building. He slipped into the crowd before he was recognized and before the awful news had spread.

There was a groan, a hoot, a yell, and the crowd stormed and raved. Stones flew, and soon there was not a window in that office left unbroken.

The Government resigned, and with its fall fell George Samways. He was not the object of any active hostility. He was simply ignored. It was as though he had never been. When he called at the Bishop's house to see Arabella, the footman stared through him and said the Bishop would be obliged

if he would write. George took the fellow by the scruff of the neck and laid him on the floor. Then he ran upstairs to Arabella's room.

"You!" she said.

"Yes. I love you."

"We can't be married now."

"No. We needn't wait now. You're coming with me."

He assisted her to pack a small handbag, and with that they set forth.

At George's lodgings they found Siebenhaar in argument with the master of the ship who had delivered them and had now come to Bondon to claim his reward. He had sailed from Cecilia in his own ship, which was even now at the docks.

"We will sail in her," said George, "and we will find my island."

"Find the island? The whole navy's looking for it!"

"It will come to me," said George.

And Siebenhaar embraced Arabella and congratulated her on having taken his advice.

XX: HOME

THEY had a pleasant voyage, saw the sea-serpent twice, and when they came to the South Seas every

night George sang those strange melodious chants that he had made out of *Tittiker*. One night when they had been at sea nigh eight months up and down the Southern Seas and almost into the Antartic, George fell into a kind of swoon and said:

"She is coming, she is coming, my mother, my land."

And Arabella, fearing for his reason, implored Siebenhaar to distract him with talk, and the master of the ship to make for the nearest port. But George silenced Siebenhaar, and in an unearthly voice he crooned:

"Cathoire Mor, or the Great — had thirty sons.
Conn Ceadchadhach, called the Hero of the Hundred Battles — slain.
Conaire — killed.
Art-Aonfhir, the Melancholy — slain in battle.
Lughaidh, surnamed MacConn — thrust through the eye with a spear in a conspiracy.
Feargus, surnamed Black-teeth — murdered at the instigation of his successor.
Cormac-Ulfhada — 'A Prince of the most excellent wisdom, and kept the most splendid court that ever was in Bareland'; choked by the bone of a fish at supper . . ."

Near dawn he rose to his feet and stood with out-

stretched arms, yelling at the top of his voice:

"Connor, or Conchabhar — 'died of grief, being unable to redress the misfortunes of his country.'

Niall-Caillie — drowned in the river Caillie.

Turgesius — 'expelled the Barish historians, and burnt their books'; thrown into a lough and drowned. . . ."

And Siebenhaar lifted up his eyes in wonder, for there was such a note of triumph in George's voice.

The sun was casting up his first rosy glow upon the sky, and against it, dark blue, almost purple, stood a tall hill that grew. There was little wind, but the ship sped forward.

"My beloved! My island!" cried George, and Arabella fell upon his neck.

As the sun rose above the horizon they slipped ashore upon the yellow sands, and George's palm tree bowed to them and they four, George, Arabella, Siebenhaar and the master of the ship, joined hands and danced together.

Then George took Arabella to the little cabin and he said:

"The house I built for you."

But Siebenhaar said:

"I am devilish hungry."

Ultimus

I: THE SON OF HIS FATHER

THOUGH her love for George never faded, Arabella could not take kindly to life on the island. She bore herself cheerfully until she was with child, and then, when she began to plan careers for her son, she was oppressed by the absence of opportunity which that life could afford. She told herself that when she was dead and Siebenhaar was dead and George was dead the boy would be left alone with the Captain, who was only a common man. She had another two months to go when the Captain disappeared one night with his ship and a cargo of rubies and emeralds. The blow was too much for her: the only means of communication with the world of Bishops and white slaves was gone; she sank into a profound melancholy: the boy was born before his time; and she died.

George flung himself on the sands and wept and swore he would call the boy Judas, because he had betrayed him. However, Siebenhaar protested, saying that, as the boy could not be christened, it was not right to give him a Biblical name. He said that he personally should call him Ultimus as he bade

fair to be the last of his line, unless, as had happened before, the island should insist on its population being continued. For that was how, after much cogitation, the philosopher had come to explain the previous strange adventure. George was indifferent, but from hearing Siebenhaar call the boy Ultimus he also adopted the name, not knowing its sad significance. Bearing deeply imprinted in his soul the marks of his unhappy contact with the world, George forbade all mention of it in his son's presence. Never was he to know of the hateful race who inhabited Fatland, and of the indomitable Fatters whose admiral had so shamefully treated his mother. However, Siebenhaar used to talk in his sleep, and he often slept in the middle of the day. When he was six years old little Ultimus came to his father and said:

"What is God? What is an engine? Is the world round? What is a mother? Who is Siebenhaar's father? What is a professor? Why does Siebenhaar talk in two ways? If you helped me to be born why can't I help someone else? Is a Bishop a kind of man? Did I kill my mother, and how did I do it if I never saw her? Is this your island? What is an island? Are there other sorts of land? Are the stars land? Is the moon land? Is the sun land? If you are my father, why isn't Siebenhaar some one's father? Are all big men fathers?

How do they do it? There are two kinds of goats, why aren't there two kinds of men? If there are she-goats, why aren't there she-men? What is a ship? Siebenhaar is always talking about ships. What is money? Are you a King? There is a King in Fatland. When is a father grand? . . ."

George gave one despairing look at his son. He groaned:

"Arabella, my love, my love."

Then he walked out into the sea and disappeared. A few hours later his body was washed up on the shore, and Siebenhaar had to explain to the boy that his father was dead. Ultimus said:

"He walked out into the sea."

"To such peace," replied Siebenhaar solemnly, "do we all come."

II: QUESTIONS

If the boy's questions were fatal to his father they were a delight to Siebenhaar, who had no further scruple about giving instruction, for, in the hardship and solitude which had been his fate since his encounter with George, his philosophy had matured and he saw that the remaining years of his life might be spent in the instruction and preparation of a disciple.

They would sit for hours together on the sands drawing maps and diagrams for illustration. Siebenhaar had no knowledge which he did not communicate to Ultimus, who by the time he was seventeen was a master of mathematics, German philosophy, the rudiments of physics, chemistry, geology, physiology, biology, psychology, botany, meteorology, astronomy. They made wind and stringed instruments and played duets composed of what Siebenhaar could remember of Beethoven. The boy was a good sculptor and painter, a carpenter, a cabinet-maker, a mason, a cook, an engineer, a weaver, a tailor, a cobbler. He could read and write five languages, was familiar with the geography of the whole world, and knew the situations of the best brothels in all the first-class ports. When he began to have needs which there was no means of satisfying, Siebenhaar explained them to him:

"You are now reaching that state of man which reveals the futility of all knowledge, since you are awakened to desires which no knowledge can satisfy. Rest assured that in the world your case would be no better, but rather would be aggravated by opportunity and failure. You are, at any rate, spared the tragedy of your father whose love destroyed the object of his desire and reduced him to a morbid condition in which your healthy wish for knowledge was

more than he could bear. It is right to wish for knowledge, because only through that can we recognise our ignorance, and see the humour of our position. If you can see that you can be happy and glad that you have lived."

Poor Ultimus tried hard to do so, but he often retired from their conversations to weep, and Siebenhaar would find him sitting in the water consoling himself with music. The unhappy youth became a prey to boredom and wearied of the arts and sciences and discussions with which they filled the day. They had long ago arrived at the conclusion that there was no God, no ascertainable purpose in the universe, and nothing in life but the fun or nuisance of living. He became romantic and plagued Siebenhaar for stories, love-stories, bawdy experiences, the tale of his meeting with George, and the deathless fable of the love of George and Arabella. From that he came to delight in the idea of war, and Siebenhaar explained to him how wars came about: how in the first place men were obsessed by superstitions about God, each community believing itself to be specially favoured and inspired by the unseen powers, and ignoring all the evidence to the contrary, as poverty, disease, corruption, bad art, inefficiency, and domestic unhappiness. As a consequence each community was jealous of every other, and sup-

ported its claims to moral superiority and divine favour with a great show of force, of armed ships on the sea and trained men on the land.

To illustrate his remarks Siebenhaar concocted explosives and Ultimus found such great amusement in them and was so busy destroying the houses he had built, the statues he had made, the engines he had contrived, that the philosopher was forced to change his theory of war and to see that it has its roots in boredom.

Thereafter Ultimus was alternately busy with the arts and sciences and with destroying all his works when he was bored with them and could not help recognising their futility. As his explosives upset Siebenhaar's nerves and the tranquillity he required for his contemplation, they made an arrangement that Ultimus should give notice of his destructive intentions when he felt them coming on. Then Siebenhaar would retire to the other side of the island and leave him to it.

The boy made a careful study of explosives and experimented with them until he could send huge palm trees hundreds of feet into the air. It became his ambition to blow up the mountain. He made several attempts, but could not succeed. He blew great holes in it and discovered mines of gold and diamonds and platinum and various new earths which, when mixed with his explosive, increased its power.

But the mountain seemed to be capable of absorbing any shock. He had just given up his experiments in despair when Siebenhaar came rushing over in a great state of excitement to say that the island had moved a degree and a half.

The two men looked at each other incredulously, not daring to believe in what was thumping in both their minds. They prepared a new charge, took their bearings, exploded it, and found that they were moving at the rate of twenty-three knots an hour, N.N.W. The next charge they placed so that the island moved W.N.W.

They could then navigate and go whither they pleased. They embraced, danced, killed a goat, and drank heavily to celebrate their triumph.

III: CIVILISATION

THE north point of the island was a rocky headland, a precipice hundreds of feet above the sea-level. Beyond it jutted three jagged rocks. One morning Siebenhaar found on one of these rocks the hull of a vessel, and when he looked closer he saw a man sitting disconsolate upon it. He fetched Ultimus, who threw stones to attract the man's attention. It was impossible to make him hear. They gesticulated to tell him to swim to his right, and at last he caught

their meaning, stripped and plunged into the sea. They had already stopped the island, which was now making only a gentle way, so that there was no danger of his being run down.

By the time they reached the shore the man was already sitting on the sands drying himself and eating a cocoa-nut. He was above middle age, and had a little fat belly and long thin legs. Siebenhaar addressed him in Fattish, and the man said he was a Rear-Admiral in the Fattish Navy and would like to know what in hell they meant by ruining his battle in which he had got the Fatters fairly on the run.

"Battle?" said Siebenhaar.

"Yes. Four cruisers, six destroyers, and torpedo craft. All gone on the rocks. The most amazing thing in all my long experience. Not a sign of a rock on the chart. You must have got the Fatters first, for their firing suddenly ceased. Who are you? What are you?"

Siebenhaar told him it was Samways Island.

The man's jaw dropped.

"I spent the best part of three years after that," he said. "I originally annexed it for the Empire."

"Not," cried Siebenhaar. "*Not* Mr. Bich?"

"Bich is my name."

Siebenhaar disclosed his identity and Rear-Admiral Bich covered his amazement and emotion with a volley of expletives. He asked after George, and

when he was told that both he and Arabella were dead he could not check his tears.

He shook Ultimus warmly by the hand and said he was the very spit of his father, with a strong look of his mother. Then he added: "I must not forget my duty as an officer, and, as a matter of form, I claim the island once more for the Empire."

"If you do," said Ultimus quietly, "I shall blow you in pieces. I know how the Fattish Empire treated my father, and, but for your kindly thoughts of my mother, I would send you to join the ships which I am only too happy to have destroyed if such a disaster can cause any genuine commotion in Bondon. I will further caution you to be careful what you say, as I am unaccustomed to society other than that of the wise Siebenhaar, and already feel my soul filled with dislike and contempt for you. This island is my island by inheritance, it is moving by my will and I shall allow you to stay on it just as long as you are useful to me."

Rear-Admiral Bich saw the strength of Ultimus' position and was silent until Siebenhaar asked him for news of civilisation, when he expressed surprise that they had not heard of the war.

"War?" said Siebenhaar. "Are they still at that game? Why, we were told that the Fattero-Fattish war was to be the last."

"That," replied the Admiral, "was a mere skir-

mish. There are six or seven nations at war with Fatterland."

"Alas! my poor country!" cried the philosopher. "I knew how it would be. Their infernal greed and conceit, their confusion of mind, their slothfulness, their desire for discipline, their liking for monuments and display, their want of tact, all these defects needed but success for them to grow into active vice and plunge them into disaster. To any nation a period of successful peace is fatal. The employment of commercial cunning unredeemed by any other exercise of the mind is, after a time, unutterably boring, and the most obvious relief from it is found in the ideal of a nation in arms. Now that is a barren ideal. To train men for so stupid and brutal a trade as the soldier's is to increase the already excessive amount of stupidity and brutality in the world. To maintain large bodies of stupid and brutal men in arms is in the end to be forced to find an excuse for using them. Human nature, I fear, is incurably pugnacious and destructive. I have had to amend many of my more optimistic opinions concerning the human race since I have had the privilege of watching the development of our young friend yonder. He is normal, healthy and intelligent, and acquainted with all the resources of civilisation, physical and mental. There is hardly a practical discovery of modern science that I have not placed

at his disposal for his use and amusement, but these do not satisfy him. He is not exposed to the nervous pressure to which in our crowded modern states I used to ascribe outbreaks of hostility. No. In the absence of an enemy he must declare war upon his own handiwork, upon the elements, upon the very earth itself."

"Before you go any further," said the Rear-Admiral, "I should like something to eat, and I should like to explain that on our side in the war is the right. The Fatters have behaved like savages. They have burned cities, murdered old men and children, raped women and committed every outrage."

"I have seen something of warfare myself," said Siebenhaar. "It is a bestial occupation. When a man has become accustomed to slaughter by license, what is there to make him stop at minor offences such as theft, rape, and wounding? Soldiers who are unchaste in peace do not become chaste when war is declared. In a friendly country the women consent. In a hostile country some of them protest, generally because they are panic-stricken and in terror of worse happening to them."

"This war," said the Rear-Admiral, "is holy."

"I am a Fatter," replied Siebenhaar, "and the Fatters have been taught for generations that all war is holy and sanctifies all that is done in its name."

"We," said the Fattishman, "fight like gentlemen."

"And," retorted the philosopher, "like gentlemen you burn and rape and pillage."

"Your conversation," said Ultimus, "has interested me extremely. I am filled with a burning desire to see civilisation, war, soldiers, and, above all, women. We will go to the centre of civilisation, and if I do not like it I shall blow it in pieces."

"Two can play at that game," said Bich. "We have explosives too."

For answer, Ultimus reached out and pressed two wires together. There was a rumble, a crash, a thud, and hundreds of tons of rock were torn away from the side of the mountain and hurled into the air to fall, miles away, into the sea.

IV: WAR AND WOMEN

As a sailor, Charles Bich, though middle-aged, liked nothing better than to talk about women. He was sentimental about them, but at the same time sensually appreciative of their beauty. To such an extent did he inflame the young man's imagination that Siebenhaar had to protest.

"It is a shame," he cried, "that the son of such a

father should be polluted with the obsessions of civilised men."

With the air of leaving no more to be said, Ultimus remarked:

"I like them."

"So do all unintelligent men," replied Siebenhaar, "and they are driven mad by them and hope against hope for the day when all restraint will be removed. This is another potent factor in the production of war. Women are not to the same degree subject to these terrible obsessions, but they do regret their limited opportunities in the organised society of peace. Further, in times of war they like to think that men are fighting for them, and they love to be regaled with stories of violence and outrage, especially those who have been entirely chaste, and have no hope of anything else."

The Rear-Admiral blushed.

"When we fight," he said, "we fight for our country, our King, our Empire, for the all-red map of the world."

"These," replied Siebenhaar, "are words. Country, King, Empire, are protective ideas. What you love and what you defend is your mode of living. which you have adopted partly because you have a prejudice in favour of it, partly because you like it better than any other you can conceive. Your living consists in eating, drinking, consorting with women,

and rearing any family you may produce. Everything else is introduced merely to disguise any unpleasantness there may be in the exercise of those functions. For the most part they are lies, illusions, hallucinations, obsessions, which you find convenient to cloak your unimportance. As a naval officer you justify the absurd occupation by which you procure your livelihood. My young friend here is under no such painful necessity and I wish him to be spared all mental confusion."

"Personally," interrupted Ultimus, "I do not wish to be influenced by either of you. You, sir," addressing Siebenhaar, "have given me all the knowledge and wisdom you have stored up in your adventurous life, and you, sir, have out of your life of duty, given me a new interest in the two things, war and women, which have hitherto been denied me. I am much obliged to you, and, if you don't mind we will continue the erection of the wireless installation we began yesterday, because I am anxious to establish communication with the world as soon as possible."

Ultimus and Bich retired to the top of the mountain leaving Siebenhaar sadly tracing on the sands a rough caricature of a woman. So horrible was it to him that he could not finish it and obliterated it with his foot.

V: WIRELESS

EVERY day brought messages from the world. The Fattish had made a glorious retreat of sixty miles. The Waltzians were offering a glorious resistance to the Grossians. With the help of God the Fatters had gloriously evacuated their trenches on the west, and heroically withdrawn from a river on the east. With assistance from above the Fattish navy had swept the Fatter flag from the seven seas. The Bilgians had been nobly extinguished, though their flag was still flying and their King ruled over a flooded country. Hundreds of thousands of men were killed, wounded, and lost. From country to country General congratulated General, Admirals sent their applause to Field-Marshals, Statesmen exchanged bravos, and monarchs thanked each other and God for timely assistance.

Rear-Admiral Bich said: "Isn't it glorious — glorious?"

"At present," replied Ultimus, "I am so confused that I can make nothing of it. Why are they all so pleased with themselves? Do they like to think of thousands of men dying?"

"They have died for their country. They are heroes."

"I don't see that. I cannot imagine myself going

out of my way to die for my island, and Fatland is also an island."

"Ah!" said the Rear-Admiral. "But there are no women on your island, no little ones, no homes."

"There is Siebenhaar who has been father and mother to me, master and instructor."

"Well! Suppose you saw men designing to murder Siebenhaar, would you not raise a hand to defend him?"

"Not if I saw there was not the remotest chance of saving him. But that is nonsense. No one would want to murder Siebenhaar."

"I don't know about that. There are times when he is so exasperating that I hardly dare answer for myself."

"That is absurd," replied Ultimus. "You know that I should destroy you at once if you did anything to Siebenhaar. The case might be different if you were in such a position that there would be consequences. But why deal with hypothesis when you are confronted with facts?"

The simple sailor was no hand at an argument, and just at that moment there came the news of the loss of a Fattish fleet after an encounter with the Fatters, with an account of the heroic death of the Commander, Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Bich.

Unfortunately the island was not yet in a position to transmit messages and the unhappy Bich had to

rest inactive, crushed with the burden of the news of his own death and his inability to contradict it.

"You see," said Ultimus, "you *have* died for your country, you are a hero, and you do not like it at all."

VI: BICH IS OBSTINATE

THE point was argued for many days. Bich would not withdraw from his assertion that it was glorious to die for his country, but at the same time he could not disguise his distress at having done so.

"If I had died," he said, "it would have been glorious."

"Only in the eyes of your countrymen," said Siebenhaar. "You already have that, and if you had died you would not have known anything about it."

"There is a heaven above," cried Bich.

"Which you could never have entered. Has not Heaven enjoined you not to kill and not to resist evil?"

"In the service of my country!"

"What does heaven know of your country? Heaven is eternal. Its laws are for eternity. Your country, your Empire are mere temporary arrangements for the convenience of a few millions of men and women who wish to profit by the labours of people less fortunate than themselves. You are there-

fore contending that it is glorious to die for a man's material advantage, or, in other words, for political and financial vested interests."

"I am prepared at any moment to die for my country."

"You *have* died."

"I have not."

"You have died and been given the glory attaching to such death."

"That is what I cannot bear."

"Then," said Ultimus, "I will give you a root which will procure you a perfectly painless death. I see that you do not mind dying for your country so long as you do not know about it."

"And that," put in Siebenhaar, "is where he is consistent. He is like all the men of his time and condition; he does not mind living, in fact he quite likes it, so long as he knows nothing about it and is not called upon to realise what he is doing. When he is faced with the consequences of such insensibility he is so appalled that he welcomes the idea of death, if he can find some excuse for it. Therefore he has invented a myth called his country and proposes to die for that. Acording to his prejudices it is cowardly to draw a fire-arm upon himself, but it is right and brave to place himself in the line of some one else's fire. Such a condition of imbecility is extremely infectious. It sweeps through crowds of

men like a disease through cattle. But, as men are indomitably hopeful, they do not destroy each other, as you, Ultimus, might suppose. No, they wait until they can discover another crowd of men in the same lamentable condition, and fall upon them in the hope of a victory which shall restore their self-conceit and once more blind them to the appalling consequences of their own ill-doing. And here, at last, we do touch upon one of the prime causes of war. Superficially it looks as though the immediate cause was this, that the governors of States make such a mess of the affairs with which they are entrusted and reduce their people to so lamentable a condition that they must seek war as an outlet, and to give the male populace as soldiers the food which they have made it impossible for them to earn as workers. There is also the consideration that a large proportion of the male populace will be removed from all possibility of making trouble. That is an interesting but a superficial view which attaches more blame to the rich than they deserve. No. A more profound analysis gives us the result I have previously indicated, that wars are invariably due to moral epidemics. And, since the human race will always be subject to them, there will always be war."

Ultimus had withdrawn at the beginning of the discussion. Having no knowledge of men in herds, he could not follow the line of Siebenhaar's argu-

ment. He returned now to say that he had obliterated another battle. On this the Rear-Admiral was excited and wished to know what ships he had seen and what flag they were flying.

"I do not know," replied Ultimus, "but there were nine ships attacking three and that struck me as so unfair that I decided to make an end of it."

"But they may have been Fattish ships! Have you no regard for human life?"

Said Ultimus:

"There was no sign of anything human. They looked like flies on the water. When I see three scorpions attacking a smaller insect I always kill the scorpions for their cowardice and the insect for having called down their anger upon itself."

Rear-Admiral Bich drew himself up to his full height and said:

"As a Christian I protest. As an officer and a gentleman I must ask you to put me ashore at the first opportunity. They may be Fattish ships which you have destroyed. My King and country need me."

"Come, come," interposed Siebenhaar, "your King and country are probably doing very well without you. They have an immense geographical advantage which only the blind jealousy of the Fatters makes it impossible for them to admit. You are already a hero; poems have in all probability been

written to your memory. You had better stay with us. It will be much more amusing to see what effect Ultimus has on civilisation than to plunge back into the fever which has seized it."

The Rear-Admiral looked scornful and very proud and said:

"Herr Siebenhaar, on our previous acquaintance only the protection of the late heroic Mr. Samways prevented me from denouncing you as a Fatter spy. I have not forgotten."

"What," asked Ultimus, "is a spy?"

"Spies," replied Siebenhaar, "are corrupt and useless people who are sent out to frighten a hostile nation by making them think that the enemy knows more about them than they do themselves. They are only used when the desire for war is very strong. They exercise a paralysing effect upon the civil population and deliver them up to the guidance of their own military authorities. They are like microbes which carry the war fever from one country to another. I regret that Sir Charles should have so small an opinion of my intelligence as to think that my country would make so trivial a use of me."

"I can't stand all this talk," muttered the Rear-Admiral, and he went away and all night long paced up and down the sands on the other side of the island, imagining that he was once more serving his King and country on his own quarter-deck.

VII: PLANS

In secret the indomitable servant of his country made himself a boat, a coracle of palm branches and mud, and when, a week later, they came in sight of land and Ultimus put in close to have a good look at it and the little white city built by the mouth of a river, he put off in it without so much as saying good-bye or thank you for the hospitality he had received.

"He will come back," said Siebenhaar; "he will come and try to annex the island. No Fattish officer can resist an island and the Fattish have been known to waste thousands of lives in order to add a bare rock or a pestilential swamp to their Empire. It is an amiable lunacy which my unhappy race, who cannot appreciate their geographical disadvantage, are trying to emulate. What is the news of the war to-day?"

"The official reports all agree in saying that there is no further development. Every capable man in every country is now bearing arms. All other activity is at a standstill. Stern measures have had to be taken by the various governments to stop the emigration of pregnant women to the peaceful countries on the other side of the world."

"Ah!" said Siebenhaar, "I thought that would happen, I thought the women would revolt as soon

as war ceased to be an excitement and became a trade."

"Some of the Governments," added Ultimus, "are paying women over forty-five years of age to go."

Siebenhaar chuckled.

"It is time we interfered, Ultimus. When they lose their sense of humour so far as that, it is time for action. We will go to Fatland. Where are we now?"

"Off the coast of Africa."

"We will lie out to sea until we have prepared the island against all dangers. First of all we will blow up the harbour. Then we will mine the shores all round. We will prepare the rocks on the tops of the mountains for missiles and we will lay in a great stock of your new transmissible explosive. We will then block the mouth of the great Fattish river, and we shall see what we shall see. An intelligent use of explosives should be able to counteract and if necessary to crush the fatuous use of them that is now being made. We will try persuasion, threats, and violence in that order to stop the war, and if then we cannot succeed we will abandon the human race altogether and return to our own Southern Seas."

"You forget," expostulated Ultimus, "that I was drawn here out of curiosity as to something else besides the war, and that is, woman."

"A man," said Siebenhaar, "bears a grudge against woman for his birth; he is a fool to burden himself with others against her."

"As I imagine them," replied the young man wistfully, "they are beautiful."

"Lord, Lord," cried Siebenhaar, "if only a young man would be content with his imaginings."

VIII: IN FATTISH WATERS

THE island moved proudly up the Fattish channel, until they came within sight of the land on either side of it. Here was drawn up a great array of ships like those which had been destroyed in the Southern Seas. On the foremost of the ships were hoisted a number of little flags which Siebenhaar interpreted as saying:

"Good morning. Welcome home."

Now, the fragmentary message recorded by the wireless gave the clue to the purport of this signal. There had been a great rally of the Fattish Empire, one colony had sent sacks of flour, another black currants, another black men, another brown sugar; all came to the aid of the motherland in her need, all forgot their grievances and vowed that they never would be slaves. In the face of such a demonstration no doubt as to whether the Fattish empire really

existed could survive. Men who would not admit black, brown, or yellow men to their clubs welcomed them to their trenches. Such unity, such loyalty, such brotherhood, must lead to victory. But victory was slow in coming and it was becoming difficult to maintain interest in the war, when, suddenly, there burst upon the Fattish public the news that the lost island was responding to the call and even now coming to place its unique powers of motion at the service of the Emperor-King. The miraculous had happened. Once more it was obvious that the right was on the Fattish side. Once more the streets of Bondon were thronged as on the eve of the declaration of war. The map of the world with the red blot made by George Samways was taken down and copies of it were sold for the Imperial relief fund. It was supposed that George Samways, the only hero of the last war, was on the island and had induced it to return to the fold. His downfall was forgotten, his heroism remembered.

Ultimus stopped the island and entered into communication by wireless with the Fattish fleet.

"Is that Samways Island?"

"Yes."

"Is George Samways aboard?"

"No. His son and his friend, Siebenhaar."

"What nationality is Siebenhaar?"

"Fatter."

"He must be taken prisoner."

"Nonsense. He is an ex-engineer, now a philosopher."

"Fatter philosophers are writing the most scurrilous abuse of the Fattish."

"Siebenhaar has been for the last twenty years on the island."

"Tell him to change his name before landing, or he will have to register."

"We have no intention of landing."

"We did not get your last message correctly."

"We have no intention of landing."

"Don't understand. May we send a deputation?"

Ultimus replied:

"I will receive one Cabinet Minister and the most beautiful woman in Fatland. I shall be in the mouth of the river by two o'clock. You had better move your ships and be very careful of the backwash. I understand that the shores of the channel are strewn with wrecks."

Frantic messages then passed between the ships and the Admiralty in Bondon. It would be extremely awkward to have the island in the river, blocking the channels to the port, but the public were thinking of nothing but the island, and, in default of George Samways, were quite prepared to take his son to be their darling. There must not be a hint

anywhere of the possibility of the island's being, after all, disloyal. The Fattish had been very reticent about their relations with God, whereas the Fatters had claimed him as their ally. The Fattish had been favored with miracles, even as the Children of Israel. It was decided to retain the miracle in the face of all risks and Mr. Samways was promised that a Cabinet Minister accompanied by the most beautiful woman in Fatland should call at four o'clock on the following day.

The fleet turned and steamed away out of sight.

IX: AN AFTERNOON CALL

THE acknowledged most beautiful woman in Fatland was none other than Arabella's sister. She was fifty-three, but had managed to preserve her reputation by the discreet publication of her connection with illustrious men. She had one rival for the honour of the visit to the island, a lovely creature, a brilliant singer of popular ballads, who, during the crisis, had carried all before her and swept hundreds of young men into the army with her famous ditty: "Won't I kiss you when you come back home?" However, her claims were disposed of by Arabella's sister astutely pointing out that she was the aunt of the

young man on the island, and therefore, if necessary, could be alone with him in perfect propriety.

In a motor launch she came out with the Lord High Chief of the Admiralty in full-dress uniform.

No sooner did she set eyes on Ultimus than she burst into tears and cried that he was the living image of Arabella. She kissed him and he drew back outraged and cried:

"Don't do that again."

Siebenhaar explained:

"Your nephew, madam, has never seen a woman before and is naturally alarmed. Your voice must sound strangely to his ears and your costume, if you will forgive me, leaves room for considerable doubt as to the normality of your anatomy. I think it would be as well if you made no attempt to reassure him, but allowed him to look at you and to grow accustomed to you while I engage your companion in conversation."

With that he turned to the Lord High Chief and said:

"You can imagine that I am astounded to return after a long absence to find civilisation plunged once more in the barbarism of war. Surely no single one of the combatants has anything to gain by it."

"The war, sir, was not of our seeking."

"But you were prepared for it?"

"By God we were. I had seen to that."

"Then you were prepared to join issue in any quarrel that might be sought?"

"We pledged our word to the Grossians and the Bilgians. Besides, sir, apart from all that, the Fatters are jealous of our Empire, and they have deliberately plotted for years to oust us commercially and politically. They want us wiped off the map. But when it comes to wiping ——"

"Does it ever come to that?" asked Siebenhaar. "Is Athens dead while Plato lives? Is Rome forgotten while Virgil and Lucretius live in the minds of men? Was there ever more in Spain than lives in Cervantes?"

"I don't know about that," says the Lord High Chief; "but the Fatters want to dominate the world."

"So did Alexander: so did Napoleon: but they wrought their own ruin."

"This is too deep for me," replied the politician. "I want something that the newspapers can get hold of. I want to know what you are up to, how you found the island, how it came to move again, and, if it isn't a miracle of loyalty, what is it? Also I want to know what your intentions are, because if you are not here to support us we shall have to place you both under arrest, — er — that is, after you have moved the island out of harm's way."

Ultimus took Siebenhaar aside and said: "I want

to go away. I have been looking at the woman, and I think she is horrible."

X: THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

THE Lord High Chief towards the end of the interview adopted a peremptory tone and ordered the island to be taken through the enemy's minefield and then to blockade the enemy's fleet. The island was to be called H.M.S. Samways, to be manned with the crew of a first-class battleship and commanded by a senior admiral. Ultimus refused point-blank. He owed nothing to Fatland, and was not going to have his island or his inventions used in a cause which he as yet did not understand. The Lord High Chief stormed and blustered until Siebenhaar told him the truth about Bich's battle and the nature of the invention of which Ultimus had spoken. The Lord High Chief went pale and muttered that he should have thought his country's cause good enough for any man. However, since they were so obstinate, he invited the islanders ashore and undertook to satisfy their curiosity with regard to the war, or the events which immediately preceded it. Arabella's sister proposed that they should stay in her house, but her invitation was refused.

No sooner had the visitors put off in the launch than Ultimus moved the island further up the river until all channels were blocked and no ship could get either in or out.

"Now," said Ultimus, "they will treat me with respect, and will not rest content until they have satisfied me and persuaded me to move the island once more."

The effect he desired was produced. They were taken up to Bondon in one of the Royal motor-cars, and a whole floor in one of the most expensive hotels was placed at their disposal. For the first time in his life Ultimus slept in a bed and was so hot that he could not bear it. He rang the bell in the middle of the night and a little chambermaid appeared.

"Take that thing away," said Ultimus.

The little chambermaid stared at him.

"I don't want it. I don't like it," he said, glowering at the girl's face. It was like a flower, like a star; it was beautiful. Ultimus could not take his eyes off it. Her eyes smiled back at his amazed curiosity. He stood and reeled and said:

"I love you."

"Yes, sir," replied the little chambermaid.

"My father said the Fattish were false. I asked them to send me the most beautiful woman in the land and they sent me a hideous old creature."

"Yes, sir."

"Ah! Why did they not send you? We could have gone away at once, away, away, where there are no old women, no battleships, no beds."

The little chambermaid by this time was fascinated, and she stayed with Ultimus all night, while he talked and told her how he had desired to see a woman and was now satisfied and never wished to see another, and how when he had seen the war he and she would retire to the island.

"Oh, sir," said the little chambermaid. "And shall I be a Queen? And won't the Fatters ever be able to get near the island? They all say the Fatters do awful things to women."

Ultimus took her to his breast and they were joined in the mystical union of a kiss; and for many hours no word passed between them.

In the morning they were disturbed by Siebenhaar, who came in unsuspectingly, saw what had happened and withdrew discreetly, gave orders to the management that Mr. Samways was not to be disturbed, and went out to see Bondon in war-time.

XI: HIGH POLITICS

THE streets were full of young men in uniform. In the parks were young men without uniform being drilled. Except for policemen, hall-porters, street-

scavengers, the town was empty, and when Siebenhaar asked a policeman why it was so, he was informed that everybody had gone to look at the island.

Said the constable: "There was nothing like it since I was a boy, when the war began."

Siebenhaar was taken aback.

"How long?" he said.

"Well! It'll be a matter of fifteen years now, though it's difficult to remember. It goes on. Things get quiet in the winter. Then it begins again with the fine weather, with a new list of Fatter atrocities. Then there's a new promise from the Emperor of Grossia; then we have another rally of the Empire and things become livelier."

"I am astonished," said Siebenhaar, "that a great free nation like the Fattish should tolerate such a state of affairs."

"Bless you," said the policeman, "I've forgotten what peace was like. There's a few old gentlemen hold meetings to talk about it, but we're used to it by now. I remember there used to be scares about our being invaded, but they soon came to an end. We all take our spell at the fighting, and, if we come home, settle down to work of one sort or another. There's no doubt about it, the Fatters would make a nasty mess of things if we didn't keep them bottled up."

Siebenhaar protested: "Surely you yourselves are making a nasty mess of things?"

"Oh!" replied the policeman. "That's over the water. You soon forget about it when you get back home. It would be funny, sir, if that there island were to put a stop to the war. We'd hardly know what to do with our young men."

Siebenhaar's blood boiled. A great nation, with a tradition of freedom, could acquiesce in such arrest of its life, such wanton sacrifice of its youth!

He visited the Lord High Chief and found him just out of his bed in a suit of blue silk pajamas. Breakfast was laid before him and he offered Siebenhaar coffee. It was refused.

"I am come, sir, to tell you that the island will not be used to assist you. It will be used to stop the war."

"Stop the ——?"

"As I say."

"Come, come, sir. The war cannot be stopped until all parties to it agree to our terms of settlement. It is a matter of high politics, which it takes an expert to understand. We have the matter well in hand. The country was told at the beginning that it was to be a long war. It will be finished when our terms are agreed upon and not before."

"And those terms are ——?"

"They are known to my colleagues and myself. When the settlement is concluded they will be laid before the country."

"And have you, sir, during the last fifteen years ever risked your life on land or sea? Have you suffered in pocket or in health? Have you been deprived of even a luxury?"

"For fifteen years I have been the hardest worked man in the country. I have practically lived in this office. When things were going badly with us I made speeches up and down the country."

"Asking young men to give their lives and thank God for the privilege of dying before they had tasted the full sweetness of life."

"It is their country's life against theirs."

"You say so."

"The Fatters will make an end of us if they don't."

"Have you made an end of the Fatters?"

"No. But we will before we have done."

"Are the Fatter women all stricken with barrenness?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then you cannot make an end of the race."

"We can smash their Empire."

"A word. Can you smash a word? You seem to me, sir, to talk and act as though a nation were an

and Ultimus was driven in the royal motor-car to the docks. The last few miles they drove through enormous cheering crowds, men, women, and children, singing as they went.

"Won't I kiss you when you come back home,
My soldier boy!
For my heart is with you as you cross the foam,
My soldier boy!
You are big and you are brave,
From the Huns our homes to save,
Or to find a hero's grave.
Won't I kiss you when you come back home!"

A motor launch took them swiftly out to the island and there Ultimus was proud to show the little house he had built and the gardens he had made.

In the afternoon they went up to the top of the mountain, where an amazing sight met their eyes. Through the smoke loomed the towers and domes and chimneys of the great city, and on the banks of the river for miles stretched the crowds of people, and others came along the roads, pouring in on foot, in carts, and wagons. Ultimus was seized with nausea, which soon gave place to rage and he stamped his foot on the ground and cried:

"There are too many of them. Let me destroy them."

But Siebenhaar wept and said:

"Rather destroy those heartless men who herd

them like cattle and rob them of the fruits of their labour and bid them believe in a God whom they deny, a national idea which they can maintain only by the destruction of life and the ruin of the nation. Destroy those who sacrifice beauty to their pleasures, and love to their obstinate pride. See, the city must be empty now, destroy it."

Ultimus moved his hand and in one moment the domes, towers and chimneys of the city disappeared. The island moved and the crowd, seeing that which they had come to see, clapped their hands and shouted until the island disappeared.

XIII: THE EMPEROR

In a few hours they were off the coast of Fatterland, and had blocked up the harbour where the Fatter fleet lay in hiding from the overwhelming superiority of the Fattish. The Emperor himself, who had already heard of the destruction of Bondon, came out to greet them. He had information as to Siebenhaar's previous career and he decorated him at sight with a Silver Eagle. To Ultimus he handed an Iron Cross.

The Emperor was dressed in a large brass helmet, a white suit with a steel cuirass, and enormous shining boots. He was a little man and very pompous.

"God," he said, "has blessed you."

"How do you know?" asked Siebenhaar.

"God," said the Emperor, "has preserved the Fatterland, through me."

"On this island," retorted Siebenhaar, "we are accustomed to talk sense. There would have been no need for God or anybody else to defend Fatterland if you had not so wantonly destroyed peaceful relations with other countries."

The Emperor removed his helmet.

"What a relief!" he said. "No one has ever talked sensibly to me before. You don't know how sick I am of being an Emperor with everybody assuming that I don't wish to think of anything but my own dignity. I am not allowed to think or talk of anything else."

"Has it ever occurred to you," asked Siebenhaar, "that a dignity which requires over a million soldiers to maintain it is hardly worth it? Have you ever thought that the million soldiers are maintained not for your dignity, but because their housing, their feeding, their equipment are all exceedingly profitable to a few men?"

"I have often thought that," replied the Emperor, "but I have never found a soul willing to discuss it with me. When I meet other Emperors the same dreadful thought haunts all of us, but none of us dare speak of it, for we are watched night and day,

and what we are to say to each other is written by young men in the Government Offices."

The Emperor began to cry.

"Four million men have been killed since the war began, and everybody says it is my fault. I didn't make the war, I didn't, indeed I didn't. It was not in my power to make war, any more than it is in my power to stop it. Horrible things have been done by the soldiers."

"Poor wretches!" said Siebenhaar. "How can they be anything but bestial, deprived as they are of all that makes life sweet?"

"How, indeed?" asked the Emperor. "Thousands have died of dysentery, or cholera, and enteric and typhoid. Hundreds of thousands more of starvation and exposure. It is impossible, I tell you, impossible to prevent organisation breaking down. Contractors!" He shook his fists. "Ah! There is nothing contractors will not do, from sending bad food to insisting on being paid for food they have never sent. Ah! the villains! the villains! And to think that my name is being execrated throughout the world."

The Emperor looked about him uneasily.

"And now, Herr Siebenhaar, what am I to tell them on my return? That your marvellous island is the gift of God to the Fatter people?"

"Say nothing," replied Siebenhaar, "except that

Mr. Ultimus Samways wishes to see the war. We are neutral territory. If we have damaged Bondon we have in coming here cleared your minefields and we propose to keep your fleet bottled up and shall destroy it unless Mr. Samways returns in safety within a week."

"We have had a delightful talk and it has been refreshing to me to discover a philosopher who is greater than an Emperor."

Siebenhaar laughed and said he looked forward to the day when capitalists and contractors discovered that the world contained a power greater than their own.

"I also," said the Emperor, "possess an island. I shall be happy when the war is over and I can retire to it and live in peace and devote myself to the delightful and harmless pursuit of painting bad pictures."

He promised that an airship should be sent for Ultimus, and said good-bye cordially and regretfully. As he put his helmet on he said:

"I have to wear this infernal thing, though it always gives me a headache."

"Now," said Siebenhaar to Ultimus, "you have seen the unhappy individual who is called the man-eater of Europe."

"Was that the Emperor?" asked the chambermaid. "Why, they told me he had a tail and always

walked about with bleeding baby's legs in his hands!"

XIV: WAR

THE airship was a great delight to the inventive genius of Ultimus. He had it brought to earth on the shore and examined the engines and propellers, and its ingenious steering apparatus. The officer in charge of it was discreet and silent, a stiff martial gentleman whose intelligence and humanity were completely hidden by his uniform. He had brought a declaration to be signed by Ultimus, saying that he was a non-belligerent and did not represent any newspaper. For Siebenhaar he had brought a bundle of newspapers of every country so that he might read what the nations were saying of each other.

At last Ultimus' curiosity was satisfied, and he stepped into the observation car, the engines started purring and the great fish-shaped balloon rose into the air.

Ultimus was surprised to see how little his island was and when they passed over into Fatterland he cried:

"Why, there is room for everybody! How

wrong I was to hate the Fattish for being so many! Why do not some of them come and live here if there is no room for them on their island?"

"They'd have a warm time of it if they did," said the officer.

"Why? Don't you like the Fattish?"

"They are pirates and thieves. They are jealous of our honest commercial success. They and they only are responsible for this war. They have set half the nations of Europe to attack us, but they attack in vain. We are glorious warriors, but they are only commercial travellers."

"In Fatland," replied Ultimus, "they say that they are glorious warriors, but you are only machines. And they say that you are jealous of their Empire, and for years have been planning to destroy their fleet."

"What nonsense!" said the officer.

They had been thousands of feet in the air, often above the clouds.

"We are approaching the western frontier."

They descended. A booming and roaring came up and a queer crackling sound. There were flashes of light and puffs of smoke, but nowhere were there signs of any men save far, far away on the roads behind the lines of smoke and flashes of light.

"That," said the officer, "is the war."

"But where are the men who are doing it?"

The officer pointed to black zigzag parallel lines in the ground.

"They are there. Those are trenches. They are impregnable. Years ago, at the beginning of the war there was some barbarous fighting with bayonets, but since we took up those positions there is nothing but what you see. Each year makes those positions stronger, nothing can move the armies from them. While the war lasts, they will be held. Is it not splendid? It is just the same on the eastern frontier, though the line there is a hundred miles longer. Ah! It is the greatest war the world has ever seen."

They came lower until they could see into the trenches. There were men playing cards, others sleeping; another was vomiting. Another was buttoning up his trousers when his head was blown off. His body stood for a moment with his hand fumbling at his buttons. Then it collapsed ridiculously. One of the men who was playing wiped a card on his breeches and then played it. Another man went mad, climbed out of the trenches and rushed screeching in the direction whence the missile had come.

"I have seen enough," said Ultimus. "Why do they go there?"

"Because if they did not Fatterland would be overrun with the savages hired by the Fattish."

"Would that be worse?"

"It would not last so long," replied the officer, "but we should have lost our honour as a nation."

"That," said Ultimus, "is exactly how the most beautiful woman in Fatland talks. What is this honour?"

"It is holy," said the officer with so fatuously fervent an expression that Ultimus laughed.

"Does your Highness wish to see the eastern frontier?"

"No, thank you. That is enough."

The airship soared up. It was now night. The stars came out and Ultimus mused:

"Out of all the planets why should this be tortured with the life of men? Is it their vast numbers that drive them mad? Or are they so vile that war is their normal condition and peace only a rest from it?"

For the first time Ultimus responded to the beauty of the world. They flew low over mountains, and great rivers and wide valleys. The variety of it all entranced him, accustomed as he was to the monotony of the sea and the narrow limitations of the island. Apart from the horror of war it was amazing to him that men should desert such loveliness to spend their days in holes dug in the ground.

XV: SIEBENHAAR ON SOCIETY

MEANWHILE on the island the philosopher and the chambermaid lived through difficult hours. The girl wept without ceasing and said if she had known how dull it was going to be she never would have come. Remembering Arabella's dissatisfaction, Siebenhaar said:

"Women have no resources within themselves. They take life too seriously. It is never amusing to them. Society is organised for their protection and amusement and they take no interest in it, and let men, who are only worried or irritated by it, bring it to ruin without a protest. Women are the criminals who are responsible for everything, for they encourage men in their vanity and weaken them in their power. They desire safety, and detest originality, intellect, imagination."

The chambermaid sobbed: "I thought it was going to be fun to be a Queen, but there is no fun in reigning over sticks and stones."

"Women," said Siebenhaar, "want their lovers and their babies and their fun. When they have to choose between the three, they choose their fun. No. They are not the criminals; it is men who are that for letting them have their fun to keep them

quiet. Oh! Ultimus, that was a true instinct of yours to destroy them in their thousands!"

XVI: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ULTIMUS was gone exactly a week, during which time he saw all the preparations for the war, the countless widows and orphans created by it, the stoppage of other business, the immense activity at arsenals, boot factories, and cloth mills, and chemical laboratories, the soup kitchens for the starving, among whom he was horrified to see thousands of men who had returned maimed from the trenches. What perhaps appalled him most was the gaiety of the children.

He mentioned this to Siebenhaar on his return. The philosopher said:

"They have been born since the war began and do not conceive of life being otherwise."

"It must end," said Ultimus, and he sank into a deep reverie. The strangest result of his experience was that the sight of the little chambermaid filled him with disgust. When he thought of the peaceful and profoundly stirring existence out of which he and Siebenhaar had come he could not but contrast it with the obscene excitement in which he had found

her. That she could accept and welcome his embraces when she knew, as he did not, the bestiality towards maintaining which the energies of Europe were devoted, filled him with so bitter an anguish that he could hardly endure the sight of her. When he thought that he and she might be bringing another life into a world made so unworthy of human life, then he thought that he could never forgive her. His impulse was to escape, to leave the benighted nations to their fate, but, when he thought of the suffering he had seen, he found that he was bound to them by more than curiosity. He had seen war and could not rest until he had done his utmost to expunge it from the minds of men. He had lived in a pure happiness familiar with all the intellectual discoveries of the human mind; now he had gained the love of beauty and a more passionate incentive to live. What room was there now among all those millions of men for intellect and beauty?

Siebenhaar had made good use of the newspapers.

"It is clear to me," he said, "that this war happened through stupidity and jealousy. They all invented excuses for it after the outbreak of hostilities. There is no reason why it should not end as suddenly as it began. It is too much to expect men debauched by fifteen years of war to see reason, but they will understand force. We will use force."

Together they drew up the following manifesto:

SAMWAYS ISLAND,
OFF EUROPE.

We, the undersigned, lately arrived in Europe, on discovering its unanimous betrayal of civilisation, hereby declare as follows:

(1) We have destroyed Bondon.

(2) The power which did that will be used against any of the present belligerents not consenting to lay down their arms.

(3) Upon the declaration of peace the fleets of the hostile nations are to be collected and sunk, the guns and ammunition of the various disbanded armies having first been laded in them. Neutral nations will then be invited by us to destroy their fleets and disband their armies.

(4) Nations in future will have no high political relations with each other except through a central government.

(5) Recognising the natural pugnacity of the human race and its love of spectacular effect, we suggest that in future nations which arrive at a complete misunderstanding should, with the consent of the central government, declare war on each other for a period of not less than one week and not more than one month, the nations to place in the firing line only the incurably diseased, the incorrigibly criminal, the lunatic and the imbecile, and all of those convicted of exploitation and profit-sharing.

(6) Not more than two thousand men are to be employed on either side, and the sphere of operations is to be narrowly limited. If desired, and to encourage a knowledge of the horror of war, we suggest that such wars be paid for by admitting spectators at a price.

(7) Wars are only to take place in August.

(8) Naval war is to be prohibited altogether as too barbarous. The central government will maintain an armed fleet for the suppression of pirates.

(9) Weapons and machines designed for the destruction of human life are only to be manufactured by the central government.

(10) Acknowledging that follies do not die easily and that nations at war will always desire territory as a trophy, we are willing to place the island at the service of the central government as the prize to be fought for. It can always be found by wireless.

(11) We submit that there shall be no discussion of the terms of settlement until the central government is set up and a proper tribunal is constituted to deal with all claims. The first step in the interest of parties is disarmament, and upon that we insist.

(Signed) IGNATZ SIEBENHAAR.
ULTIMUS SAMWAYS.

XVII: PEACE

THIS manifesto was transmitted by wireless to all parts of the world. It was published in the newspapers of America, and therefore could not be suppressed by the various National Committees for Keeping the Public in the Dark. Ultimus received invitations to all the capitals of the belligerent nations. He said that if they had anything to say they could say it by wireless. Meanwhile if nothing was said the Fatter fleet would be destroyed within a week: the Fattish fleet immediately after it: and the various ports and capitals would one by one meet the fate of Bondon.

A great deal was said. Almost every day mean little men, who looked as though they had been fat only a short time before and then scorched, arrived to offer Ultimus his own price for his new explosive. They all said the same thing: the enemy alone was responsible for the war and it would never end until the enemy was destroyed. Therefore, in the interests of civilisation and universal peace, Mr. Samways ought to sell, nay, give to humanity the secret of his invention.

"I am using it in the interests of civilisation," said he, "and, as you see, I am resisting all temptation to make money out of it. The proper use of an explo-

sive is that for which I made mine, namely, to destroy every ugly and useless thing I had made."

And the mean little men went away. Two of them committed suicide on their way back to shore, so troubled were they at being deprived of the monopoly which had enabled them to drive millions of men to the slaughter that the rest might be miserable slaves in their hands.

As a matter of fact, these two had been ruined by the destruction of Bondon, upon which they had been dependent for the world-wide circulation of their credit.

Day after day brought the news of the suicide of one great financier after another, and the army contractors, realising that they might not be paid for their efforts, abandoned them. No food or supplies reached the armies, which came home in search of food. The Emperors of Fatterland and Grossia fled to their country estates. The Emperor of Waltzia had been dead for ten years, though his death had been concealed.

Before long a number of intelligent men from every country had met in Scandanavia and a central government was proclaimed. The Fattish, Fatter, Grossian, Waltzian, and Coqdorian fleets were collected in the North Sea, and Ultimus had the great satisfaction of driving the island through them.

XVIII: THE RETURN OF THE ISLAND

AND now Ultimus could breathe again. Came the news every day of tremendous rejoicings in all the countries, and in all the name of Ultimus Samways was blessed. He was asked by every one of them to anchor his island off their shores, but he replied:

"Not until the lunatic that is in every European is dead, can I dwell among you. It is easy for you, whose lives are shallow to forget. But I have seen and suffered and I cannot forget. When you have discovered the depths in your own lives and each man recognises the profound wonder of every other, then will the thought of the philosopher Siebenhaar be as fertile seed among you and you will reap the harvest of brotherhood."

When he had sent this message to the United States of Europe he sought out the little chambermaid and said to her:

"I beg your forgiveness. I have let the horror of war break in upon my devotion to you. We are making for the Southern Seas. If you prefer it you can retire to Bondon, though I must warn you that your luxurious hotel is now a hospital for the cure of astute business men."

The little chambermaid replied:

"I did want to go to see the fun when peace was

declared, having seen the fun in the streets when they declared war. But it's come over me now that I love you and only you, and I want to be by your side to give you all the happiness you have brought into my heart."

And Siebenhaar said:

"This is a mystery past the understanding of men, but the understanding is its servant."

Gynecologia

I: HISTORY

I, CONRAD P. LEWIS, of Crown Imperial, Pa., U.S.A., do hereby declare that the following narrative of my adventures is a plain truthful tale with nothing added or taken away. At the end of a long life I am able to remember unmoved things that for many years I could not call to mind without horror and disgust. Even now I cannot see the charming person of my daughter without some faint discomfort, to be rid of which (for I would die in peace) I have determined to write my story.

The whole civilised world will remember how, during the years when Europe was sunk under the vileness of a scientific barbarism, there was suddenly an end of news from Fatland. Our ships that sailed for her ports did not return. Her flag had disappeared from the high seas. Her trade had entirely ceased. She exported neither coal nor those manufactured goods which had carried her language, customs, and religion to the ends of the earth. Her colonies (we learned) had received only a message to say that they must in future look after themselves, as, indeed, they were as capable of doing as any other collection of people. In one night Fatland ceased to be.

It was at first assumed that her enemies the Fatters had invaded and captured her, but, clearly, they would not destroy her commerce. Moreover, the Fatters were at that time and for many years afterwards living in a state of siege, keeping nine hostile nations at bay upon their frontiers. This was the last of the great wars, leading, as we now know, to the abolition of the idea of nationality, which endowed a nation with the attributes of a vain and insolent human being, so that its actions were childish and could only be made effective by force. When that idea died in the apathy and suffering and bitterness of the years following the great wars then the glorious civilisation which we now enjoy became possible.

The disappearance of Fatland took place shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, which, from the practice which the Europeans had in those days, was always accomplished with great expedition. Every four years or so, when the exhausted nations once more had enough young men over eighteen, there would be some little quarrel, or an arranged assassination, or an ambassador would be indiscreet. One war, I remember, broke out over a scuffle between two bakers in the streets of Bondon: they were a Fattishman and a Fatter, and they had been arguing over the merits of the Fattish loaf and the continental bâton. The Press of both countries took it up:

their governments had a good class of troops that year and they did not hesitate to use them. We, in the Western world, were accustomed to it by then and knew how to keep our trade alive through neutral countries. Also, I regret to say, we had engaged upon the dreadful traffic in war material. In those days we were still bounded by the primitive civilisation of Europe. We had not been wakened to manhood and the way of life and eternity, we had not been taught to be elemental in our own elemental continent by the sublime masterpiece of Junius F. Hohlenheim.

When it became clear that Fatland could not be in the hands of the Fatters: when, moreover, we were told that she was taking no part in the last and bloodiest of the wars, and when, after many months, there came no news of any kind, then our merchant-monarchs (now happily extinct) fitted out an expedition, with credentials to the Fattish Government, if any. Wild rumors had spread that the Gulf Stream was diverted, making the Skitish islands uninhabitable, but I had just then returned from a voyage to Norroway and knew that it was not so. I had gazed at the coasts of the mysterious islands with pity, with curiosity, with sad and, I must own it, sentimental longing. Were they not our home? We were still colonists in those days, always looking to other lands than that in which we lived. "O Fatland," I cried.

"O mother inviolate!" But we had the captain's wife on board and she laughed and said that was not the adjective to apply to a mother.

II: CASTAWAY

On my return I married and put my savings into my father-in-law's brush-making business, which was almost at once ruined, and I had to go to sea again. Government money had been got for the expedition I told you of, and I knew that pay would be higher on that account. I sent in an application, and, having an uncle well placed, was taken on as third officer. A dirty little gunboat had been put in commission, and directly I set eyes on her I knew the voyage would be unlucky. We were but three days out when we had trouble with the propeller shaft and were carried far north among the ugliest ice I ever saw, and narrowly escaped being caught in a floe. Fortunately we ran into a southward current in the nick of time and, with a fresh wind springing up, were quickly out of danger. However, the years of war had added another peril to those of nature. We fouled a mine among the islands of Smugland and were blown to bits. At the time I was standing near a number of petrol cans, and when I came to the surface of the water I found

some of them floating near me. I tied six of them together and they made a tidy little raft, though it was very uncomfortable. On them I drifted for four days until hunger and thirst were too much for me and I swooned away. I was then past agony and my swoon was more like passing into an enchantment than a physical surrender.

I was not at all astonished, therefore, when I came to my senses to find myself in a bed with a man sitting by my bedside. Very glad was I to see him, and I cried out in a big voice:

"Kerbosh! If I ain't got into heaven by mistake."

The man shook his head sadly and said:

"Heaven? No."

But I could not shake off the feeling that I was in Heaven. The man had long hair and a beard, and I could be pardoned for taking him for Peter. He wore a rough shift, a long kilt below his knees, and thick stockings, and by his elbow on a little table, was another stocking which he had been knitting. He gave me food and drink, and I at once felt stronger, but somewhat squeamish, so that the sense of hallucination clung about me. When I asked where I was, the man tiptoed to the door, opened it and listened, then returned to my bedside and said in a whisper:

"It is as much as my place is worth, but I would

warn you as man to man to make good your escape while you may. As man to man, I say it, man to man."

He was so terribly excited as he said this that I decided in my own mind that he was a harmless lunatic, one of the many whom the great wars had rendered idiotic. To humour him I repeated:

"As man to man."

And I put out my hand. He seized it and said in a desperate voice:

"I am old enough to be your fa ——"

Footsteps sounded on the stairs and in absolute terror he stopped, took up his knitting and plied the needles frantically.

III: MY CAPTOR

THE footsteps came up to the door of the room in which I lay. The door opened to reveal a truly remarkable figure; plump, short, with a tousled mop of reddish-grey hair and a wide, pleasant, weather-beaten face. This figure was clad in a loose blue coat and Bulgarian trousers, very baggy about the hips and tight about the calves; not at all an unbecoming costume, though it both puzzled and pained me. So much so that I pretended to be asleep, for I

was averse to being made to speak to this strange object. A woman's voice addressed the man with the knitting and asked him how I was. He replied that I had come to my senses and gone to sleep again. As luck would have it, the food I had eaten so hastily began just then to cause me acute discomfort, and my body, escaping my control, relieved itself after its fashion. Thereupon the woman, perceiving that I was malingering, fell upon me and shook me until my teeth rattled and delivered herself of an oration upon the deceitfulness of man. I was still suffering acutely and could offer no resistance, though I cried out that I was an American citizen and neutral and should have the matter brought to the ears of my Government.

"In this country," said my assailant, "men are men and are treated as such, and we do not recognize the existence of any other country in the world. You will get up now and place your superior strength at the service of those who feed you and as far as possible justify your existence."

The man with the knitting had crept from the room. He returned with a shift, a kilt and stockings like his own. I was made to put these on, the woman, in defiance of all decency, watching me and talking shrilly all the time. Then she drove the man and myself out of doors and set us to work at hoeing in a field of turnips, while she whistled to a

dog that came bounding over a hedge, and trudged off in the direction of a wood.

"Who is she?" said I. "Is she your wife?"

"Wife?" answered he. "Wife! There is neither marriage nor giving in marriage. She is a farmer, and I, who was once a Professor of Economics, am her labourer. Intellectually I am in despair, but physically I am in such rude health that I cannot entertain the thought of self-destruction long enough to commit the act. She is my niece, and when the change came she undertook, as all women did, to provide work for her male relatives above a certain age."

"Change?" I whispered. "What change?"

"Have you not heard?" he said. "Is the country severed from the civilised world?"

I informed him of the expedition which I had joined. He gave a long hopeless sigh and fell into a great silence which moved me far more than his words had done. We plied our hoes in the immense field which was situated in a desolate region of slight undulations the outlines of which were blurred with rank growth.

Presently I broke in upon his silence to ask his name.

"I was," he murmured, "I was Professor Ian Baffin."

"Can it be possible?" I cried, for the fame of

that great man was world-wide, and during the notorious Anti-Trust elections in my country his works had been in every cultured home. I told him this, but it brought him no comfort.

"At the time of the change," he said, "I and fifty other Professors and Fellows of Colleges published a manifesto in which we pointed out the disasters that must ensue, and we even went so far as to promise them degrees at the major universities, but the change came and the universities were destroyed."

"What change?" I asked again.

He leaned on his hoe and gazed toward the setting sun.

IV: THE CHANGE

"ABOUT the tenth year of the second of the great wars," he said, "there was a convulsion in the country. A young idealist appeared who with fiery and vulgar eloquence proclaimed that war was the triumph of the old over the young, to whom since the world began justice had never been done. The old, he said, were in the position of trustees who had betrayed their trust and instead of working for the benefit of the endless army of the young who came after them, devoted all their energies to robbing them of their birthright. To extricate themselves

from the punishment which must otherwise have fallen on them they exploited the courage and love of adventure of the young and set them to destroy each other. So successful had they been in this device that they could count on using it at least once in every generation, and politicians knew that when they were at the end of their tether they could always procure a continuance of their offices and emoluments by declaring war. This had been the condition of civilised existence for so many thousands of years that it was generally accepted and the truth was never suspected until our young idealist arrived with honey on his lips for the young and gall and bitter invective for the old. He rushed up and down the country persuading young men on no condition to take up arms. 'Government?' he said. 'What government do you need except such as will provide you with roads, railways, lighting, bread for the incapacitated, and drainage for all?' I signed a manifesto against him too. His ignorance of economics was pitiful. In the end martial law was proclaimed and he was shot. The young men did not listen to him, but the young women did. Shooting him was a mistake. It gave his name the magic of martyrdom. By the thousand, women, old, young, and middle-aged, cherished his portrait in their bosoms, prayed to him in secret, vowed themselves to his cause, and remained chaste. Nunneries were founded in his

name, but so potent was the spell of his martyrdom, so overwrought were the women of this country by the many crises through which we have passed, that amid all the temptations of life they were dedicated to his memory and preserved their virginity. They said if the country can find no better use for our sons than to send them to the slaughter and disablement, we will breed no sons. The Government was warned, but like all governments they could not see beyond the system by which they governed, and when at last they were convinced that something serious was happening, they could think of no other remedy than that of giving votes, i.e. a share in the system by which they enjoyed their positions. At first, to show their contempt for the Government, the women did not use their votes until the country was shown by an energetic and public-spirited woman that another war was in the making. An election was forced and the Government was defeated. At the conclusion of the second great war you may remember that Bondon was destroyed, and with it the Houses of Parliament and the Royal Palace. A new capital was chosen, but as Fatland was no longer the center of the world's credit system, finance had lost its old power. A new type of politician had arisen, who, in order to win favour with the women, set himself to do all in his power to make government impossible. The enormous numerical superiority of

the women made their leaders paramount in the land, though there was still officially a Cabinet and a House of Swells. On the third and last outbreak of hostilities the officials made their final despairing effort and declared war on Fatterland, but they had no army. They had been unable to rebuild their fleet as all the other countries had done. They were helpless. The Cabinet and the House of Swells, to set an example to the country, armed themselves and went to the front, taking with them the last ten thousand young men in the country. They never returned and the country was left populated solely by old men, cripples, and women, of whom a few thousand were pregnant. These were interned. A committee of influential women was formed and issued a decree that Fatland would henceforth have no share in male civilisation. Men had, to cut a long story short, made a mess of things, and women would now see what they could do. They began by abolishing property in land. The first, the only important thing was to feed the population. The State guaranteed to everybody food, housing, and clothes. Able-bodied women were to take charge of their male relatives and make them useful. Decent women, that is to say virgins, were to work on the land. All women guilty of childbirth were to be sent to work in the factories. I cannot remember all the laws made, for my memory has been impaired

by my sufferings, but they were all dictated by an unreasoning and venomous hatred of men. We are little better than slaves. They laugh at us affectionately, but they despise and ignore our thoughts. They have defied every economic law, but astonishingly they continue to live."

"Indeed," said I, "the world goes on. The sun sets and will rise as it has done these millions of years, with change upon change, folly upon folly beneath it. We turn up the earth for the food we eat and so we live. Truly I think there is some wisdom in these women."

The sun went down, a bell rang in the farmhouse, we shouldered our hoes and returned thither, each busy with his own thoughts.

V: THE HOMESTEAD

To my annoyance I found that the bell was not a summons to a meal, but to a meeting of the family of five women for a kind of a service. This consisted in reading aloud from the speeches of William Christmas, the idealist who had provoked this monstrous state of affairs. His portrait hung on the wall opposite the door, and I must confess that his face was singularly beautiful. The woman who had roused me from my bed read a passage begin-

ning: "The tyranny of the old is due to their stupidity, which neither young men nor women have yet had the patience to break through." And as she closed the book she said, "Thus spake William Christmas." Whereupon the other women muttered, "of blessed memory, which endureth for ever and ever. Amen." These women were plain and forbidding. Their eyes were fixed on the portrait with a dog-like subjection which I found most repulsive. They stood transfixed while the woman-farmer declaimed: "For guidance, William Christmas, spirit of woman incarnate, we look to thee in the morning and in the evening, in our goings out and our comings in, and woe to her who stumbles on the way of all flesh into the snares of men." On that the five of them turned and glared sorrowfully at my old friend and me until I was hard put to it not to laugh. The meeting then came to an end, and we were told to prepare supper. We withdrew to the kitchen, and there Professor Baffin began to snigger, and when I asked him what amused him he said:

"The joke of it is that this Christmas, like all idealists, was as great a lecher as Julius Cæsar. It was his lechery made his position in the old order of society impossible."

I laughed too, for I had begun dimly to understand the passion which moved these virgins in their chastity, and I was filled with a fierce hatred of the

lot of them, and resolved as soon as possible to escape.

We cooked a meal of fish and eggs, and having laid the table we had to wait on the family. I was struck by the triviality of their discourse and the absence from it of any general argument. The five women twittered like sparrows in mid-winter and not once did they laugh. They talked of the condition of their beasts and their crops, and so earnest, so careful were they that I understood that it must be barren soil indeed that would resist their efforts. They were discussing what goods they would requisition from the district store in return for their contribution to the State granaries. I wondered if they had succeeded in abolishing money, and upon enquiry I found that they had. The Professor told me that they had abolished everything which before the change had made them dependent upon men and their pleasure.

"But why do you men stand it?" I cried.

"We would starve else. We have no credit. Contributions to the State granaries are not accepted from men, nor are men allowed to trade direct with the stores."

"But cannot they revolt and use their strength?"

"The strange thing is," said the Professor, "that men cannot now endure the sight of each other. They are as jealous of each other as women were in

the old days. Besides, writing is forbidden, and no book is allowed save the posthumous works of the lecherous William. The libraries were destroyed on the same day as the arsenals. Intelligence is gagged. Thrift and a terrible restless activity are now our only virtues."

"And art?"

"Art? How should there be art? It was never more than the amusement of women in their idleness. They are no longer idle and I must admit that they are admirably methodical in their work, energetic and straightforward as men never were. But it is ill living in a woman-made world and I shall not be sorry when death comes."

VI: OBSEQUIES

DEATH came to the old man that night, and so surprised him that he was unable to feel anything. I had been put to sleep in the same room with him and was awakened by his talking. He was delivering himself of what sounded like a lecture, but he broke off in the middle to say:

"This is very astonishing. I am going to die."

I struck a light, and there he was lying with a smile of incredulity upon his face, and I thought that,

if we were sentient beings when we were born, so and not otherwise we would accept the gift of life. So and not otherwise do we greet all manifestations of life which have not become familiar through habit.

I was grateful to the old man for giving me the key to my own frame of mind. I spoke to him, but he was dead.

His loud discourse had roused the mistress of the house who came knocking at the door, saying:

"Baffin, if you don't behave yourself I shall come and tickle you."

So astounded and outraged was I at this address that I leapt out of my bed, donned my kilt, and said:

"Come in, woman, and see what you have done. This learned old man, whose mind was one of the glories of the world, has been driven to his death, starved, deprived of the intellectual habits through which a long life had been ——"

I got no further, for the woman flung herself upon me and tickled my sides and armpits until I shrieked. Two other women came rushing up and held me on the floor, and then with a feather they tickled my feet until I was nearly mad. I wept and cried for mercy, and at last they desisted and withdrew, leaving me with the corpse, to which they paid not the slightest attention.

The next morning I was told to dig a grave and

to prepare the body for burial. There was no more ceremony than in a civilised country is given to the interment of a dog, and in the house I only heard the old man referred to twice. The youngest of the women said, "He was a dear old idiot," but the mistress of the house shut her mouth like a trap on the words: "One the less."

But a day or two later I found upon the grave a pretty wreath of wild flowers, and that evening under a hedge I came on a little girl, who was crying softly to herself. I had not seen her before and was puzzled to know where she came from. She said her name was Audrey and she lived at the next farm, where they were very unkind to her, and she used to meet the old man in the fields and he was very nice to her, and when she heard he was dead she wanted to die too. The men on the farm were rough and dirty, and the women were all spiteful and suspicious.

When I asked her if she had put the wreath on my old friend's grave, she was frightened and made me promise not to tell anyone. Of course I promised, and I took her home. As we parted we engaged to meet again in the wood half-way between our two houses.

VII: SLAVERY

In my own country I have often remarked the cruel lack of consideration with which women treat their servants, but here I was appalled by the bland inhumanity of the conduct of these women toward myself. I was given no wages and no liberty. (I could not keep my engagement with Audrey.) I was a hind, and lived in horror of the degradation into which I saw that I must sink. Day after day of the cruel work of the fields brought me to a torpid condition in which I could but blindly obey the orders given me when I returned home. Especially I dreaded the evenings on those days when the mistress of the house went to the district stores, for she always returned out of temper and found fault with everything I did. Also, when she was out of temper, her readings from the Book of Christmas were twice as long as usual.

I was some weeks in this melancholy condition, not knowing how I could make my escape and indeed despairing of it, when I was sent on a message to the next farm. On the way back I met Audrey, at the sight of whose young beauty I forgot the despair which latterly had seized me. I rushed to her and caught her up in my arms and kissed her. Thereupon she said she would never go back, but

would stay with me forever. I could not deny her, for I had found in her the incentive which I had lost in my growing indifference to my fate. She was but a child, and the only gracious being I had met in this ill-fated country. Hand in hand we wandered until dusk, when I hid her in the hay-loft and returned to my duties.

I was severely chidden for my long absence and ordered during the next week to wear the Skirt of Punishment, a garment of the shape fashionable among women at the time of the great change. Poor Audrey could not help laughing when she saw me in it, but having no other clothes I had to put off all thought of escape until I was released from punishment. Never before had I realised how cramped the mind could become from the confinement of the legs. My week in a skirt came very near to breaking my spirit. Another four days of it and I believe I should have grovelled in submissive adoration before my tyrant. Only my nightly visits to Audrey kept me in courage and resolution.

VIII: A STRANGE WOOING

THE youngest of the women in the homestead was the last to speak to me. She was dark and not uncomely, and I had often noticed her at the readings smile rather fearfully at her own thoughts. Once

my eyes had met hers and I was shocked by the direct challenge of her gaze. At the time I was disturbed and uneasy, but soon forgot and took no notice of the woman except that I felt vaguely that she was unhappy. But soon I was always meeting her. I would find her lurking in the rooms as I came to scrub and clean them. Or she would appear in the lane as I came home from the fields, or I would meet her in the doorway, so that I could not help brushing against her. A little later I missed one of my stockings as I got up in the morning and had to go barefoot until I had knitted another pair.

One night as I was creeping off to my poor Audrey, now deadly weary of her close quarters in the hay, to my horror I met this woman clad in her night attire. She vanished and I went my way thoroughly frightened. I told Audrey to be ready to come with me next day, for we were spied upon and could not now wait, as we had planned, until my little thefts from the larder had given us a sufficient store of food.

Nothing happened the next day and I gave up my determination to ransack the larder. That night as I opened the door I found the woman pressed against it, so that she fell almost into my arms. She clung to me wildly, assured me that I was the most beautiful man she had ever seen, and tried to press me back into my room, her tone, her whole bearing

conveying an invitation about which it was impossible to be mistaken. It chilled me to the heart, coming as it did so suddenly out of the coldness engendered by the rigid separation of the sexes and the deliberate humiliation of men in that woman-ridden region. As gently as I could I put her from me, though it was not so easy, and I rushed out into the night. I could not tell Audrey what had happened, but as soon as I saw her I felt that the moment for our escape had come. If we did not seize it I should be denounced and tickled, if not worse. We crept away and made straight across the fields and at dawn hid in a wood.

IX: THE RUINED CITY

I WAS relieved to hear from Audrey that there were no newspapers. She told me that a man from her farm had run away but was never found. There were always new men coming, because it was impossible for them to obtain food except what they could kill. In the summer there were always men wandering about the country, but they came back in the winter and were glad to work for their board and lodging. I soon understood this, for when we had exhausted our store we were often a whole day without a morsel passing our lips, and I began to see the

foolhardiness of my attempt at liberty. Again and again I besought Audrey to leave me, but she would not. She could always have obtained a meal for herself had she gone alone to a house, but wherever I went I was asked for my registered number, and at first had not the readiness to invent one. At last I told one woman I was 8150. She asked me what district and I did not know. On that she bundled me out and I was lucky to escape detention. When I asked Audrey about the registration she said all men were registered with a number and a letter. The men on her farm had been L.D. Next time I said I was L.D. 8150, and when asked my business I said I was taking my young miss to the nunnery at O. Either my answer was satisfactory or Audrey's beauty was the passport it would be in any normal country, for we were handsomely treated and given a present of three cheeses to take to the nuns.

We ate the cheeses and were kept alive until, after a fortnight's journey, we came on a dismal mass of blackened buildings. We entered the city, once world-famous for its textiles, and never have I been so near the hopelessness of the damned. The remains of a dead civilisation; decomposing and festering; grass grew in between the cobbles of the streets; weeds were rank; creepers covered the walls of the houses and their filthy windows. Huge factories were crumbling away, and here and there we

came on immense piles of bricks where the chimneys had tumbled down. For miles we walked through the streets and never saw a soul until as we turned a corner into a square we came on a sight that made me think we had reached the lowest Hell.

X: THE OUTLAWS

THERE was a great fire in the middle of the square, and round this was a tatterdemalion crew of men and women. They were roasting an ox, and, as they waited for it, they sang and danced. When we approached near enough to hear what they were singing I blushed and felt aggrieved for Audrey. Many of the men and women were perfectly shameless in their gestures, and I wished to go back the way we had come. However, we had been seen, and were drawn into the light of the fire and asked to give an account of ourselves. I told them I was an American citizen only too anxious to return to my own country now I had seen the pass to which theirs had been brought. Audrey clung to me, and I said she was my little cousin whom I had come to deliver, and that, having wandered hungry for so many days, we had taken refuge in the town in the hope of faring better. We were given stools to sit on, and slices of the best cut of the ox were put before us.

The rest drank spirits and wine from some cellar in the town and were soon more crazy than ever, and more obscene, but with my belly full of good meat I was not offended and preferred their debauchery to the icy virtue which had so horribly oppressed me at the homestead. Audrey was excited by it all, but I knew that her innocence could take no harm.

Presently there was only one man sober besides myself. He came towards me and invited me to stay the night in his house where he lived alone with his son. I liked the looks of the man. He was poorly clad, but in the old fashion of coat and trousers, whereas the costumes of the men in the square were strange and bizarre.

As we walked through the dark streets our new friend told me that all the great cities of Fatland were in this condition, abandoned to the dregs of the population, degraded men and women, idle and lawless, with the leaven of the few proud spirits who would not accept the new regime and found a world governed by women as repulsive as a world governed by men. I was astonished at this, for I could not then see, as later I saw, the abomination of civilised life as I had known it at home. Perhaps a sailor, for whom life ashore means pleasure and relief from responsibilities, cannot feel injustice and inequality. On the sea he has his own way of dealing with those poisons.

The house we came to was small but comfortable. My new friend explained that he was able to keep alive by dealing with the outlaws, who kept money current among themselves, and, indeed, had come to regard him as their counsellor and peacemaker, and never returned from their raids without bringing him some tribute. Seeing me dubious of the morality of this, he explained that under the old order he had been a shareholder in joint-stock companies and accepted his share of the profits without scruple as to how they had been obtained. He told me further that he was quite alone in the city, and that no one else maintained the old life. He had registered himself in compliance with the law, but could not leave the mathematical work to which his life had been devoted, for he believed that he would achieve results which would survive all the vicissitudes of Fattish civilisation even as the work of Pythagoras had survived ancient Greece. The number of outlaws, he said, was growing, and there would eventually be a revolution, to lead which he was preparing and educating his son, Edmund. His own sympathies, he declared, had at first been with the women, who had been driven to extricate the country from the vicious circle of war into which it had been drawn by the egregious folly of men. But when, having achieved this, they abused their power and, in the intoxication of their success, defied nature her-

self, then he had abandoned all hope and had taken the only means of dissociating himself from the life of his country, namely, by staying where he was. To be sure the women had established agriculture on a sound basis, but it was vain for them to breed cattle if they would not breed themselves.

I asked him if he was a widower. He said No.

XI: EDMUND

THIS man's son was the most charming boy I ever set eyes on. He was eighteen, but had the carriage and assurance of a young man in his prime, most resolute and happy. He liked talking to me and was more communicative than his father. For a fortnight he would work steadily at his books, imbibing the principles of government in the philosophers from Plato down. He thought they were all wrong, said so, and but for his simplicity I should have put him down as conceited. It was very slowly as I talked to him that I came to realise the revolution in thought produced by the great European wars and the terrible consequences, how fatal they had been to the old easy idealism. The new spirit in its generous acceptance of the gross stuff of human nature and its indomitable search for beauty in it has been expressed for all time by our poet, Hohlenheim, and

I only need state here that I encountered it for the first time in that ruined city. Not, however, till Hohlenheim expressed it did I recognise it.

But for Hohlenheim I could believe in a Providence when I think of Edmund and Audrey. They were as bee and flower. The honey of her beauty drew him and he was hers, she his, from the first moment. I had regarded her as a child and was amazed to see how she rejoiced in him. I had expected more modesty until I reflected how in such darkness as that which enveloped Fatland love must blaze. It flared up between them and burned them into one spirit. So moved was I that all other marriage, even my own, has always seemed a mockery to me.

How gracious Audrey was to me! She promised me that Edmund would hurry up his revolution so that I could return to my own country, but I was given to understand that the position was very difficult, because his own mother was Vice-Chairwoman of the Governing Committee. For a week at a time Edmund would be away rounding up outlaws, and, at great risk, preaching to the kilted and registered men in the fields. Had he been caught he would have been tickled to death.

After a time I went with him on his expeditions. It was amazing how his eloquence and his personality produced their effect even on the dullest minds.

The stream of men proceeding to the ruined city increased every day, and we began to have enough good people to suppress the reckless rioters somewhat and to organise the life of the town something after the fashion of the Italian city-state, except that we made no warlike preparations whatsoever. Most encouraging of all, we had a growing number of young women coming into the place, and thankful as they were to escape the nunneries or the spinsterhood of the farms, they quickly found mates and produced children. The birth of every baby was made a matter of public rejoicing.

But alas! my ill-luck pursued me. On one of our expeditions we were cut off and surrounded in a field by a patrol of women. Edmund managed to escape, but I was captured and tortured into making a confession of what was going on in the ruined city. I did not see how my confession could do any harm, and I don't know what happened, but though my friends must have known where I was they made no attempt to rescue me or to communicate with me. I think I should have died rather than confess but for the thought of my wife. My strongest passion then was to see her again. Let that, if excuse is needed, be mine.

XII: THE NUNNERY

As Edmund disappeared through a gap in the hedge I was attacked by a mob of women, screaming at the top of their voices. They talked me into a state of stupefaction and led me dazed in the direction of a great building which I had taken for a factory or workhouse. Here with the leader of my captors I was hustled through a little gate with the mob outside hooting and yelling:

"Man! Man! Man!"

I was flung into a cell and left there to collect my wits, which I found hard of doing, for I was near the limits of my endurance, and I did not see how I could hold out against the numbing influence of such absolute feminism. In the society to which I had been accustomed men, whatever their misdeeds, had always treated women with indulgence, but here the life of a man was one long expiation for the crime of having been born. I had spirit enough left in me to revolt, but my feeling could only express itself in bitter tears. I wept all night without ceasing, and the next day I was so weak and ill that I slept from utter exhaustion.

Bread and water were handed in to me through a hole in the door, but the bread was sour and the water was foul to my taste. Once again I fell a vic-

tim to the sense of hallucination, and when at last the door of my cell was opened and a human figure entered I was half-convinced that I was honoured with a visitation by an angel. I fell on my knees and the "angel" called me to my senses by saying:

"Fool, get up."

I obeyed and my visitor informed me that she was the Medical Superintendent come to inspect me. I was ordered to strip and stand in the middle of the cell while the superintendent walked round me and surveyed me as farmers do with cattle. She prodded my flesh and asked me my age and what illnesses I had had. She sounded my lungs and tested my heart and appeared to be well satisfied. As she scanned my person there came into her eyes a quizzical, humorous look, in which there was a certain kindly pity, so that I was reassured and plucked up courage to ask where I was and what was going to be done with me. I was told that I was in the great nunnery of O, and that my destiny depended upon her report. I asked her to make it a good one and she laughed. I laughed too, for indeed mine was a most ridiculous position, standing there stark naked under her scrutiny. It became necessary for me to cover myself, and when I had done so we still stood there laughing like two sillies. She said:

"You'll do."

"For what?"

"I can give you a certificate for fatherhood."

I gasped and protested that I was married, and expressed my horror of any such misconduct as she proposed. She ignored my protest and said:

"The mothers of your children will be carefully chosen for you."

On that I roared with laughter. The idea was too preposterous. The superintendent reproved me and said that any ordinary man would give his eyes to be in my position, which I owed entirely to my wonderful physique. I declared my unwillingness and demanded as an American citizen to be set at liberty. She told me that the idea of nationality was not recognised and that I must serve the human race in the way marked out for me. "How?" said I. "Marked out for me? By whom?" I was assured by my own physical fitness. I protested that I could not look upon fatherhood as a career, but was told that I must consider it among the noblest. I maintained that it could never be for a man more than an incident, significant and delightful no doubt, but no more to be specialized in than any other natural function. Argument, however, was impossible, for on this subject the superintendent's humour deserted her. However, her interest was roused and she was more friendly in her attitude, and consented to explain to me the institution which she served. It was not in the old sense a nunnery, for its inmates

were not vowed to seclusion, and though portraits of William Christmas were plentiful on its walls, there was no formal devotion to his memory. It was literally a garden of girls. Female children were brought from the affiliated crèches to be trained and educated for the functions of life to which they were best fitted. The intelligent were equipped for the sciences, the strong for agriculture, the quick and cunning for industry, the beautiful for maternity. Male children were farmed out and given no instruction whatever, since they needed no intelligence for the duties they had to perform. "But the birth-rate?" I said, and received the answer: "Should never be such as to complicate the problem of food. It is better to have a small sensible population than one which is driven mad by its own multitude."

I was far from convinced and said: "Such a world might a student of bees dream of after a late supper of radishes."

My new friend replied that I had not lived through the nightmare of the great wars, or I would be in a better position to appreciate the blessings of a scientific society. She admitted that men were perhaps treated with undue severity, but added that, for her part, she believed it to be necessary for the gradual suppression of the masculine conceit and folly which had for so long ravaged the world. In time that would right itself, the severity would be

relaxed, and men would assert an undeniable claim to a due share in the benefits of civilisation. In the meanwhile, she would do all in her power to befriend me. I implored her to certify me unfit for fatherhood, but she would only yield so far as to declare that I was in need of a month's recuperation and distraction.

With that ended my interview with that extraordinary woman, who in happier circumstances would have been a glory to her sex.

I was presently removed from my cell to a pleasant room in the lodge by the gate, and I was made to earn my keep by working in the garden. At the end of a week I was despatched by road to the capital to appear there before the examining committee of the department of birth.

XIII: IN THE CAPITAL

As luck would have it my guardian on the long journey by road — for motor-cars had not been renounced — was a little chatterbox of a woman, who coquetted with me in the innocent and provocative manner of the born flirt. She meant no harm by it, but could not control her eyes and gestures. I encouraged her to make her talk, and she told me it would have gone hardly with me but that the medi-

cal superintendent had been passing by the gate of the nunnery as I was thrust in. But for her I should have been condemned to work in the sewers or to sell stamps in the post office, menial work reserved for criminals, for the authorities were becoming exasperated with the agitation for the rights of men. The outlaws no one minded. They inhabited the ruined cities and sooner or later would be starved out. It was absurd to expect the new society to be rid altogether of the pests which had plagued the old, but every reasonable woman was determined that for generations men should not enjoy the rights which they had so wantonly abused.

"But," I said, "men never claimed rights."

"No," answered my coquette, "they stole them when we were not looking. They insisted that we should all be mothers, so that we should be too busy to keep them out of mischief."

"My dear child," said I, "it is the women who have kept us in mischief."

"No one can say," she replied, "that we do not keep you out of it now." And she gave me one of those arch involuntary invitations which have before now been the undoing of Empires. I could not resist it. I seized her in my arms and kissed her full on the lips.

I half expected her to stop the car and denounce me, but when she had made sure that the girl driving

had not seen she was undisturbed and remarked with a charming smile:

"Some foreign ways are rather pretty."

I repeated the offence, and by the journey's end we were very good friends and understood each other extremely well. She agreed with me when I said that all forms of society were dependent upon a lot of solemn humbug. She said yes, and she expected that before she had done she would be put upon her trial. I did not then understand her meaning, for we parted at the door of a large house, where she was given a receipt for me. She saluted me, the dear little trousered flirt, by putting her finger to her lips as the car drove off.

There were no women in that house. Its inhabitants were a number of young men like myself, all superb in physique and many of them extremely handsome, but they were all gloomy and depressed. I was right in guessing them to be other candidates for fatherhood. They were guarded and served by very old men in long robes like tea-gowns. Horrible old creatures they were, like wicked midwives who vary their habit of bringing human beings into the world by preparing their dead bodies to leave it. But the young men were hardly any better: they were dull, stupid, and listless, and their conversation was obscene.

We had to spend our time in physical exercise, in

taking baths and anointing our bodies with unguents and perfumes. We were decked out in beautiful clothes. Embroidered coats and white linen kilts. In the evenings there were lectures on physiology, and we were made to chant a poetical passage from the works of William Christmas, a description of the glory of the bridegroom, of which I remember nothing except an offensive comparison with a stallion.

The humiliation was terrible, and when I remembered the superintendent speaking of " the mothers of my children " I was seized with a nausea which I could not shake off, until, two days after my arrival, an epidemic of suicide among the candidates horrified me into a wholesome reaction against my surroundings. I found it hard to account for the epidemic until I noticed the coincidence of the disappearance of the most comely of the young men with the periodic visits of the high officials. This pointed, though at first I refused to believe it, to the vilest abuse of the system set up by the women in their pathetic attempt to solve the problem of population scientifically. Far, far better were it had they been content with their refusal to bear children and to impose chastity upon all without exception, and to let the race perish. Must the stronger sex always seek to degrade the weaker? My experience in that house filled me with an ungovernable hatred of women. The sight of them with the ab-

surdities of their bodies accentuated by the trousered costumes they had elected to adopt filled me with scorn and bitter merriment. The smell of them, to which in my hatred I became morbidly sensitive, made me sick. The sound of their voices set my teeth on edge.

Such was my condition when, after three weeks' training, I was called before the examination committee.

XIV: THE EXAMINATION

NOTHING in all my strange experiences astonished me so much as the lack of ceremony in this matter of fatherhood. It was approached with a brutal disinterestedness, a cynical disregard of feeling equalled only by men of pleasure in other countries. I was filled with rage when I was introduced to the committee of middle-aged and elderly women and exposed to their cold scrutiny. First of all I was told to stand at the end of the hall and repeat the poem of William Christmas. I had been made to get it by heart, but in my distress I substituted the word Ram for the word Stallion. The chairwoman rapped angrily on the table.

"Why do you say Ram for Stallion?"

"I replied: "Because it more aptly describes my condition. There is nobility in the stallion, but the ram is a foolish beast."

There was a consultation, after which the chairwoman bade me approach and said:

"Your medical report is excellent but we are afraid you lack mental simplicity. You are an educated man."

"I am an American citizen," I replied proudly, "and I protest against the treatment to which I have been subjected."

"We know nothing of that," retorted the chairwoman. "You are before us as L.D. 8150, recommended for paternal duties and, if passed, to be entered in the stud-book. Your record since you have been in the country is a bad one, but points to the possession of a spirit which for our purposes may be valuable."

I said: "You may call me what you like; you may register me in any book you please, send me where you choose, but I am a married man and will not oblige you."

Then a fury seized me and I shouted:

"Can you not see that you are driving your people into madness or disaster, that you will soon be plunged again into barbarism, that your science is destroying the very spirit of civilisation? I tell you that even now, as you work and plan and arrange,

there is growing a revolt against you, a revolt so strong that it will ignore you, as life in the end ignores those who would measure it with a silver rod."

The chairwoman smiled as she rejoined:

"Those are almost identically the words I addressed to the late Prime Minister of Fatland when, after thirty years of prevarication, he was persuaded to receive a deputation. I am afraid we must reject you as a candidate for the duties for which you have been trained. In the ordinary course you would be put upon your trial and committed to a severe cross-examination, an art which has been raised by us to the pitch of perfection. As it is, we are satisfied that you are labouring under the disadvantage of contamination from a man-governed society and are probably not guilty of the usual offences which render candidates unfit. We therefore condemn you as a man of genius, and order you to be interned in the suburb set apart for that class."

I bowed to cover my amazement, a bell was rung, and I was conducted forth. Outside, meeting another candidate, green with nervousness, I told him I had been rejected, whereupon he plucked up courage and asked me how I had managed it. I told him to say Billy-Goat instead of Stallion.

XV: MEN OF GENIUS

I HAD not then met Hohlenheim and did not know what a man of genius was, and for genius I still had a superstitious reverence. Before I left the committee hall I was given a coloured ribbon to wear across my breast and a brass button to pin into my hat. On the button was printed M.G. 1231. What! said I to myself, Over a thousand men of genius in the country! never dreaming that some of them might be of the same kind as myself, so obstinate are superstitions and so completely do they hide the obvious.

As I passed through the streets of the capital I found that I was the object of amused contemptuous glances from the women, who walked busily and purposefully along. There were no shops in the streets, which were bordered with trees and gardens and seemed to be very well and skilfully laid out. I was free to go where I liked, or I thought I was, and I determined not to go to the suburb, but to find a lodging where I could for a while keep out of trouble and at my leisure discover some means of getting out of the abominable country. Coming on what looked like an eating-house, I entered the folding doors, but was immediately ejected by a diminutive

portress. When I explained that I was hungry she told me to go home.

I was equally unfortunate at other places, and at last put their unkind receptions down to my badges. Is this, I thought, how they treat their men of genius? My applications for lodgings were no more prosperous, and I was preparing to sleep in the streets when I met an enormously fat man wearing a ribbon and button like my own. He hailed me as a comrade, flung his arm round my shoulder and said: "The cold winds of misfortune may blow through an æolian harp, but they make music. Ah! Divine music, in paint, in stone, in words, and many other different materrials." "I beg your pardon," said I, "but the wind of misfortune is blowing an infernal hunger through my ribs, and I should be obliged if you will lead me to a place where I can be fed." "Gladly, gladly. We immortals, living and dead, are brothers." So saying he led me through a couple of gardens until we came to a village of little red houses set round a green, in the center of which was a statue. "Christmas!" I cried. "Christmas it is," said my guide, "the only statue left in the country, save in our little community, where the rule is, Every man his own statue."

Community within community! This society in which I was floundering was like an Indian puzzle-box which you open and open until you come to

a little piece of cane like a slice of a dried pea.

However, I was too hungry to pursue reflection any further and without more words followed my companion into one of the little red houses, where for the first time for many months I was face to face with a right good meal. Here at any rate were sensible people who had not forgotten that a man's first obligation is to his stomach. I ate feverishly and paid no heed to my companions at table, two little gentlemen whom at home I would have taken for elderly store-clerks. When at last I spoke, one of the little gentlemen was very excited to discover that I was an American. "Can you tell me," he said, "can you tell me who are now the best sellers?"

"What," I asked, "are they?"

They looked at each other in dismay.

"*We* were best sellers," they cried in chorus.

After the meal they brought out volumes of cuttings from the American newspapers, and I recognised the names of men who had in their works brought tears to my eyes and a smile to my lips.

"Do I behold," I said, "the authors of those delightful books which have made life sweeter for thousands?"

They hung their heads modestly, each apparently expecting the other to speak. At last my fat friend said:

"Brothers, we will have a bottle of port on this."

The port was already decanted and ready to his hand. Over it they poured out their woes. Publication had stopped in Fatland. There was no public, and the public of America had been made inaccessible. How can a man write a book without a public? It would be sheer waste of his genius. When a man has been paid two hundred dollars for a story he could not be expected to work for less, could he? I supposed not, and the little man with the long hair and pointed Elizabethean beard cried hysterically:

"But these women, these harpies, expect us to work for their bits of paper, their drafts on their miserable stores. When they drew up their confounded statutes they admitted genius: they acknowledged that we should be useless on farms or in factories. They allowed us this, the once-famous garden suburb, for our residence and retreat, but they made us work — work — us, the dreamers of dreams! But what work? The sweet fruits of our inspiration? No. We have been set to edit the works of William Christmas, to write the biography of William Christmas, to prepare the sayings of William Christmas for the young. No Christmas, no dinner, and there you are. Is such a life tolerable?"

"No!" cried the fat man.

"What is more," continued the indignant one, "we are asked to dwell among nincompoops who

have never had and never could have any reputation, young men who used to insult us in the newspapers, cranks and faddists who have never reached the heart of the great public and are jealous of those who have. And these men are set to work with us in our drudgery, and they are paid exactly at the same rate. Fortunately many of them waste their time in writing poetry and drama while we do their work and make them pay in contributions to our table. Pass the port, brother."

They spent the evening reading aloud from their volumes of press cuttings, living in the glorious past, while they appealed to me every now and then for news of the publishing world in America. I invented the names of best sellers and made my hosts' mouths water over the prices I alleged to be then current. They were so pleased with me that they pressed me to stay with them and to work on the new Concordance of Christmas.

XVI: REVOLUTION

WORK on the Index, I soon found, meant preparing the whole mighty undertaking, while my three men of genius smoked, ate, drank, slept, talked, and went a-strolling in the capital. There was this advantage about being a man of genius that I was free to come

and go as and when I liked, though I was everywhere scoffed at and treated with good-humoured scorn. I was always liable to insult at the hands of the high-spirited young women of the capital who held placēs in the Government offices and had acquired the insolent manners of a ruling class. However, I soon learned to recognise the type and to avoid an encounter, though my poor old friends often came home black and blue.

There was a great deal more sense in Christmas than I had at first supposed, and, as I progressed with my work, I saw that what he meant was very near what Edmund and his father had been at, namely, that men and women, if only they set about it the right way, can find in each other the interest, amusement, and imaginative zest to dispel the boredom which is alone responsible for social calamities. His appeal had been to men, but he had only reached the ears of women, anad they had hopelessly misunderstood him. They had expected him to have a new message and had taken his old wisdom for novelty by identifying it with his personality. He had not taken the precaution to placate the men of genius of his time. Without a marketable reputation they could not recognise him. They refused to acknowledge him and drove him into the strange courses which made him seem to the nerve-ridden women of

the country new, fresh, and Heaven-sent. Certainly he had genius, as my professional men of genius had it not, and it came into too direct a contact with the public mind. The smouldering indignation of ages burst into flame. More and more as I worked I was filled with respect for this idealist and with pity for the human beings who had followed him to their undoing. His insight was remarkable, and I made a collection of his works to take back with me to America, if I should ever go there.

I stayed in the Suburb of Genius for a couple of years, very pleased to be away from the women, and among people many of whom were amusing. There were painters and sculptors, who spent their time making Christmas portraits and effigies, cursing like sailors as they worked. Very good company some of these men, and most ingenious in their shifts and devices to dodge the rules and regulations with which they were hemmed in. Some of them had smuggled women into their houses and lived in a very charming domesticity. I envied them and was filled with longing for my home.

One day as I was at my work I came on an unpublished manuscript of Christmas. It contained a poem which I liked and a saying which fired me. This was the poem:

"The woman's spirit kindles man's desire,
And both are burned up by a quenchless fire.
Let but the woman set her spirit free,
Then it is man's unto eternity.
It is a world within his hands, and there
They two may dwell encircled in a square."

I could never quite make sense of it, but it seized my imagination as nonsense sometimes will, and prepared it for the convulsion which was to happen.

This was the saying:

"There will come one after me who shall build where I have destroyed, and he shall capture the flame wherewith I have burned away the dying thoughts of men."

The words haunted me. They were in none of the Christmas books, nor in the biography. I inserted it in the Concordance and in a new edition of the Speeches, on my own responsibility and without saying a word to my employers. There might or might not be trouble, but I knew that the Chairwoman of the Governing Committee was a vain old creature and would take the words to mean herself. To my mind they pointed straight to Edmund. I knew that his cause was gaining ground and that, if I could gain sufficient publicity for the saying, his following would be vastly increased.

I was on good terms with the chief of the publishing department and was able to persuade her to announce that the new edition of the Speeches was the

only one authorised by the Governing Committee; all others to be called in. The success of my trick exceeded all my dreams. There was something like an exodus from the capital.

I met my dear Audrey one day. She had come to spy out the land. Her news was glorious. For miles round the once ruined city the farms were occupied with happy men and women working together to supply food for the towns, which in return furnished their wants from its workshops, which the toilers filled with song as they worked. The fame of it was everywhere growing. Other ruined cities had been occupied. Two of the great nunneries were deserted. Edmund with a great company of young men had taken possession of a town by the sea and opened the harbour and released the ships.

"Ships!" I said. "There are ships sailing on the sea!"

That settled it. No more men of genius for me. That night I spent in chalking up the saying of William Christmas on the walls of the capital. The next morning I was with Audrey wandering about the streets, hearing Edmund's name on all lips, and then, satisfied that all would be well, I made for the sea-board.

It was good to see America again, but I suffered there as acutely as I had done in Fatland. I had been among women who, if misguided, were free.

My dear wife and I could never understand one another and she died within a very few years after my return of a broken heart. I thought I could not survive her, and should not have done but for my fortunate encounter with Hohlenheim, who could understand my loathing of woman in Fatland, of man in America, draw it up into his own matchless imagination and distil the passion of it into beauty.

Out of Work

I: MR. BLY'S HEART BREAKS

In a little house, one of many such houses, in a town, one of many such towns in Fatland, sat Nicholas Bly, a small stationer and newsagent, by the bedside of his wife. She said: "Ain't I thin, Nick?" and again she said: "My hair is only half what it was." And he said: "It's very pretty hair." She smiled and took his hand in hers and she died. When Nicholas Bly was quite sure that she was dead, when he could believe that she was dead, he did not weep, for there were no tears in his eyes. He said nothing, for there were no words in his mind. He felt nothing, for his heart was breaking, and so little was he alive that he did not know it. His wife was dead, his two children were dead, his shop was closed, and he had two shillings in the world, and they were borrowed.

He went out into the street and when he saw a well-fed man he hated him: and when he saw a thin hungry man he despised him; on returning to his house he found there a Doctor and a Parson. The Doctor said his wife had died of something with two long Latin names.

"She starved," said Nicholas Bly.

The Parson said something about the will and the love of God.

"The devil's took her," said Nicholas Bly.

The Parson cast up his eyes and exhorted the blasphemer to seek comfort in duty and distraction in hard work.

"I'm out of work," said Nicholas Bly; "the devil's took my work and my wife and my two children. Hell's full up and overflowed into this 'ere town and this 'ere street. We must fight the devil with fire and bloody murders."

The Parson and the Doctor agreed that the poor fellow was mad.

II: MR. BLY IS IMPRISONED

NICHOLAS BLY'S stomach was full of emptiness, the heat of his blood parched his brains, and his sleep was crowded with huddling bad dreams. He ate crusts and cabbage stalks picked up out of the gutter, and when he was near mad with thirst he snatched beer jugs from children as they turned into the entries leading to their houses. His days he spent looking for the devil. Three nights he spent moving from one square with seats round it to another, and on the fourth night he heard of a brick-

field where there was some warmth. He slept there that night and was arrested. The magistrate said:

"I am satisfied that you are a thoroughly worthless character, an incurable vagabond, and if not yet a danger, a nuisance to society. . . ."

(The magistrate said a great deal more. He was newly appointed and needed to persuade himself of his dignity by talk.)

Nicholas Bly was sent to prison.

III: THE DARK GENTLEMAN

WHEN he left the prison Nicholas Bly realised that he had legs to walk with but nowhere to go, hands to work with but nothing to do, a brain to think with but never a thought. He was almost startled to find himself utterly alone, and his loneliness drove him into a hot rage. In prison he had thought vaguely of the world as a warm place outside, to which in the course of days he would return. Now that he had returned the world had nothing to do with him and he had nothing to do with it. He prowled through the streets, but a sort of pride forbade him to eat the cabbage stalks and crusts of the gutters, and to rob children of their parents' beer he was ashamed. He looked for work, but was everywhere refused, and he said to himself:

"Prison is the best the world can do for men like me."

But he was determined to give the world a better reason for putting him in prison than sleeping in a brick-field because it was warm. The world was cold. He would make it warm. The devil was in the world: he would burn him out, use his own element against him.

He chose the largest timber-yard he could find, and that night he stole a can of petrol, and when he had placed it in a heap of shavings went out into the street to find some matches. He met a seedy individual in a coat with a fur collar and a broad-brimmed hat, who looked like an actor, and he asked him if he could oblige him with a match.

"Lucifers," said the seedy individual and gave him three.

Nicholas Bly returned to the timber-yard with the matches. He struck one. It went off like a rocket. The second exploded like a Chinese cracker, and he was just lighting the third when he heard a melancholy chuckle. He turned his head and found the seedy individual gazing at him with an expression of wistfulness.

"Like old times," said the seedy individual.

Nicholas Bly lit the third match and it flooded the whole yard with Bengal light, and still he had not set fire to his petrol.

"Gimme another match," said Nicholas Bly; "watch me set fire to the yard and go and tell."

"I have no more," replied the stranger. "Those were my last. I no longer make fire or instruments of fire. No one wants my tricks. I have lost everything and am doomed."

"I have lost my wife, my children and my work."

"I have lost my kingdom, my power and my glory."

"The devil took them," answered Nicholas Bly.

"I wish I had," replied the stranger.

IV: THE DARK GENTLEMAN'S STORY

NICHOLAS BLY fetched a screech loud enough to wake a whole parish. The dark gentleman pounced on him firmly and gagged him with his hand, and his fingers burnt into the newsagent's cheek.

"Be silent," said the dark gentleman, "you'll have them coming and taking you away from me. Will you be silent?"

Nicholas Bly nodded to say he would be silent. Then he said:

"If you didn't take them, who did?"

"Jah!" said the devil, for the dark gentleman was no other. "Jah took them. Jah does every-

thing now, at least I am forced to the conclusion that he does, since I find everything going on much the same. I knew how it would be. I knew he would find it dull only dealing with virtuous people. It was very sudden. I was deposed without any notice just in the middle of the busiest time I'd had for centuries. I have had a horrible time. No one believed in me. For years now I have only been used to frighten children, and have occasionally been allowed to slip into their dreams. You must agree that it is galling for one who has lived on the fat of human faith — for in the good old days I had far more souls than Jah. I haven't been in a grown man's mind for years until I found yours open to me."

"I don't know about that," said Nicholas Bly. "I want my wife. I want my two children. I want my work."

"Anything may be possible if you will believe in me."

"I'll believe in anything, I'd go to Hell if I could get them back."

"There is no Hell," said the devil.

V: COGITATION

THIS was a little difficult for Nicholas Bly. For a long time they sat brooding in the darkness of the timber-yard. Then said Nicholas Bly:

"Seeing's believing. I see you. I believe in you. You're the first critter that's spoke to me honest and kindly this many a long day. You seem to be worse off than I am. We're mates."

"Thank you," said the devil. "In the old days I used to offer those who believed in me women, wine, song and riches. But now we shall have to see what we can do."

"I want to spite that there Jah."

"We will do our best," said the devil.

With that they rose to their feet, and as they left the timber-yard the devil shook a spark out of his tail on to the petrol, so that they had not gone above a mile when the wood was ablaze and they could see the red glow of the fire against the sky.

VI: CONFLAGRATION

GLEEFULLY the devil took Mr. Bly back to watch the blaze, and they were huddled and squeezed and

pressed in the crowd. A fat woman took a fancy to the devil and put her arm round his waist.

"Where are you living, old dear?" she said.

"You leave my pal alone," said Nicholas Bly.

But the devil gave her a smacking kiss, and she slapped his face and giggled, saying:

"Geeh! That was a warm one that was."

And she persisted until the devil had confessed his name to be Mr. Nicodemus. Then she said she had a snug little room in her house which he could have — his pal too if they were not to be separated.

Mr. Bly demurred, but Mr. Nicodemus said:

"You can only get at Jah through the women."

So they pursued the adventure and went home with the fat woman, but when she reached her parlour she plumped down on her knees and said her prayers, and the devil vanished, and she was so enraged that she swept Nicholas Bly out with her broom. He hammered on her door and told her why his friend had vanished, and that if she would say her prayers backward he would return. She said her prayers backwards and Mr. Nicodemus returned.

VII: TIB STREET

THE fat woman's name was Mrs. Martin, and when she found that her beloved had a tail she was not at all put out, but to avoid scandal, cut it off.

All the same there was a scandal, for the fascination of Mr. Nicodemus was irresistible, and the house was always full of women, and whenever he went out he was followed by a herd of them. Mrs. Martin was jealous, Mr. Bly sulked and Mr. Nicodemus had a busy time placating indignant husbands and lovers. Not a house in Tib street but was in a state of upheaval. The men sought consolation in drink, and presently there was hardly one who had retained his work.

"We are getting on," said Mr. Nicodemus. "We are getting on. In the good old times men left their work to follow me, and it used to be a favourite device of mine to make their work seem so repulsive to them that they preferred thieving or fighting or even suffering to it. If we end as we have begun, then Jah will be as isolated as you and I have been."

And he chuckled in triumph and bussed Mrs. Martin.

"That," said she, "reminds me of Martin; and

he was a oner, he was. That's worth anything to me."

With that the good creature bustled off to arrange for a week's charing to keep her lodgers in food.

Shortlived, however was the triumph of Mr. Nicodemus, for, with the women neglecting their homes and the men their work, the children sickened and died, and no day passed but two or three little coffins were taken to the cemetery. And in their grief the women remembered Jah, and went to church to appease His wrath. The men were sobered and returned to work, but at wages punitively reduced, so that their last state was worse than their first, for the women were now devoted to Jah and the children were empty and their bellies were pinched.

Nicholas Bly cursed Jah. The sight of the little coffins being taken out of Tib Street reminded him of his own children and he went near mad and vowed that Jah was taking them because He was a jealous God, one who had taken Hell from the devil and their children from men in the purblindness of His fury.

And he began to preach at the corner of Tib Street.

VIII: MR. BLY'S SERMON

He said:

"There are many filthy streets in this town, but this is the filthiest. Who made it filthy? Jah! It is the nature of man to love his wife and his children, to dwell with them in peace and loving-kindness. But for all his love, wherewith shall a man feed his wife and children? What clothing shall he give them? What shelter find for them? Go you into this street and look into the houses. You will find crumbling walls, broken stairs, windows stuffed with clouts: you will find bare shelves and cupboards: you will find dead children with never so much as a whole shroud among them. You will say that perhaps they are better dead, but I say unto you that if a man's children be dead wherewith shall he feed his love? And without a full love in his heart how shall a man work or live or die? Are we born only to die? And if life ends in death what matters it how life be lived? But, I say unto you, that because life ends in death a man must see to it that all his days are filled with love, which is beauty, which is truth. And I say unto you when your eyes are filled and bleeding with the pain of the sights you shall see here, go out into the fields and to the hills and the great waters and see the sun rise and shed his light

and go down and cast his light upon the moon, and draw vapour from the earth and bring it again in the rain; and feel the wind upon your faces, and see the sodden air hang upon the earth until the coming of the storm to cleanse its foulness: and do you mark the flight of the birds, the nesting of the birds, the happy fish in the waters, the slow beasts in the fields: observe the growth of trees and plants, and grasses and corn. Then you shall know the richness of love among the creatures that know not Jah. They die and are visited with sickness even as we, but theirs is a free life and a free death unconfined by any sickness of the mind or tyranny of Gods and Demons. We alone among creatures are cheated of our desires and perish for the want of food amid plenty, and are cut off each from his full share of the abounding love of the world. Who takes our share? Jah! Who kills our love? Jah! Who filches the best of our thoughts, the keenest sap of our courage? Who fills our lives and homes with darkness and despair, and meanness and emptiness? Jah! I know not who Jah is, nor whence He came, but I will dethrone Him."

IX: THE EFFECT OF MR. BLY'S SERMON

STREET oratory was at that time very common, but there was a note in Mr. Bly's eloquence which attracted many of the inhabitants of the district, especially the young, and he achieved a certain fame. No one knew exactly what he was talking about, for, except for expletive purposes, the word Jah had dropped out of the vernacular. Mr. Bly was assumed to be some kind of politician, and he was certainly more exciting than most. Therefore his audiences were twice as large as those of any other speaker. Seeing this, a Labour Agitator came to him and offered him a place on his committee and a pound a week as a lecturer.

"I can speak about nothing but Jah," said Mr. Bly.

"Speak about anything you like so long as you catch their ears," said the agitator.

So Mr. Bly accepted the offer.

X: THE WIDOW MARTIN

WHEN Mr. Bly told his infernal companion of his engagement Mr. Nicodemus said:

"Talking is a very human way of creating a disturbance. My way and Jah's way is the way of corruption. We unseat the mind and poison the soul with unsatisfiable desires. But if you wish it I will go with you. We have lit a fire in Tib Street that will burn itself out without us."

"I should like your company," replied Mr. Bly. "It helps me to be reminded that Jah has been unjust to more than human beings. It redoubles my fury and kindles my eloquence. I am determined to earn my pound a week and drive Jah out of the land."

The devil began to draw on his shabby fur coat. Mrs. Martin had been listening to their conversation. She burst in upon them and vowed that her Nick should never, never leave her. With horrible callousness Mr. Nicodemus told her that he was pledged to Mr. Bly, and asked her for his tail. She refused to give it up, and was so stubborn that, at last, after they had argued with her, and pleaded and stormed, and bribed and bullied, she said she would produce his tail if she might go with them; and they consented, for Mr. Nicodemus said that if he were ever returned to power he would be in need of his tail, and indeed would be a ridiculous object without it, his system of damnation being supported by tradition and symbol and ritual.

They had a merry supper-party, and that night

took train for the town appointed for Mr. Bly's first appearance on a political platform.

XI: MAKING A STIR

WHERE other politicians dealt in statistics, which, after all, are but an intellectual excitement, a kind of mental cats'-cradle, our orator sounded three notes: he appealed to a man's love of women, his love of children, and led his audience on to hatred of Jah. To the first two they responded, were persuaded that they were as he said, cheated and betrayed, and, though they could not follow him further without losing their heads, they lost them and were filled with hatred. And as Mr. Bly never made any reference either to Government or Opposition his speeches were reported in the newspapers on both sides, and aroused the greatest interest through the country. The well-to-do found breakfast insipid without his utterances, and, to support him, they subscribed largely to the funds of the organisation which promoted his efforts. His salary was raised to two pounds a week on the day when a Conservative organ published his portrait and a leading article on the golden sincerity of the Working Classes.

XII: MAKING A STIRABOUT

WHERE other orators damned everything from sewing cotton to battleships, and so could not avoid giving offence, Mr. Bly damned only Jah and hurt nobody's feelings. But he produced an effect. He laid every grievance at Jah's door, and roused so much enthusiasm that at last he began to believe in his power.

It is not often that the people find a leader, and when they do they expect him to lead. They were impatient for Mr. Bly to reveal to them a line of action, and here he was puzzled. It was one thing (he found) to talk about Jah, another to bring Jah to book. He had no other machinery than that of the Labour Agitators, who had been making elaborate preparations for a strike. Their preparations were excellent, but their followers were reluctant. They could provide them with no adequate motive. In vain did they talk of the dawn of Labour, the Rights of the Worker, and a Place in the Sun; to all these the people preferred the prospect of pay on Saturday. Nothing could stir them, until, at last, at one of Mr. Bly's meetings when he was being hailed as a leader and implored to lead, and at his wit's end what to do, upon a whisper from behind, he said:

"Strike! Strike against Jah! You are workers! Why do you work? To feed your children. Your children die. Strike, I say, strike while the iron is hot, the iron that has entered into your souls from the cruel tyranny of Jah! There is no other enemy. You have no other foe. . . ."

He did not need to say more. The fat was in the fire.

XIII. SPARKS FLYING

THE fat crackled and sputtered. In thirty-six hours the business of the town was at a standstill, and by that time Mr. Bly had visited three other towns, and they too succumbed to his passion. At every town he visited he was welcomed with brass bands and red carpets, and his orders were obeyed. The Labour Agitators of the neighbouring countries desired his services and cabled for him, and he promised to go as soon as Jah was driven out of Fatland.

The strikes were begun in feasting and merry-making, and things were done that delighted Mr. Nicodemus and the widow Martin's heart:

"The men are becoming quite themselves again."

And Mr. Nicodemus gazed upon it all and sighed:

"Ah! If only Hell were open!"

The widow Martin gazed upon him voluptuously and muttered:

"It would be just 'Eaven to keep that public you're always talking about for ever and ever with you."

XIV: SMOULDERING

THE strikers soon came to grips with want and the very poor were brought to starvation. Only the more fiercely for that did their passion glow. They forgot all about Mr. Bly and Jah: they were only determined not to give in. They knew not wherefore they were fighting, and were savagely resolved not to return to their old ways without some palpable change. Forces and emotions had been stirred which led them to look for a miracle, and without the miracle they preferred to die. The miracle did not come and many of them died.

XV: SUCCOUR

WITH a moderate but assured income the Fattish are humane, that is to say, they grope like shadows through life and shun the impenetrable shadow of death. They shuddered to think of the very poor dying with their eyes gazing forward for the miracle that never came, and they said:

"To think of their finding no miracle but death! It is too horrible. Can such things be in Fatland? Why don't we do something?"

So they formed committees and wrote to the newspapers and started various funds; and they invited Mr. Bly to lecture in aid of them.

He came to Bondon, lectured, and became the fashion. He discovered to his amazement that there were rich people in Fatland, and these rich people formed Anti-Jah societies. Enormous sums of money were collected for the strikers, because the rich were so delighted to be amused. Mr. Bly amused them enormously. Mr. Nicodemus gave a course of lectures on the Kingdom from which Jah had deposed him, and Mrs. Martin held meetings for women only, to expound her views of men. For years the rich people had not been so vastly entertained, and they poured out money for the strikers.

Unfortunately their subscriptions could buy little else for the very poor but coffins, and of them the supply soon came to an end.

Famine and pestilence stalked abroad, but only the more fiercely did Mr. Bly urge the destruction of Jah, and the more blindly and desperately did the starving poor of Fatland look for the miracle.

But soon not only were the poor starving, but the comfortable, the tradespeople, the professional classes, the humane persons with moderate but as-

sured incomes were faced with want. Rats were now five shillings a brace, and a nest of baby mice was known to fetch four shillings.

When the rich found their meals were costing them more than a pound a head then they forgot their craze and Mr. Bly, and Mr. Nicodemus and the widow Martin withdrew from Bondon. Mr. Bly was no longer reported in the newspapers. His name had become offensive, the bloom had gone from his novelty, the varnish from his reputation, and the sting out of his power.

In all the towns gaunt spectre-like men began to sneak back to work, and Mr. Bly was nigh frenzied with rage, disgust and despair.

"It is Jah!" he said. "It is Jah. He has crept into the hearts of men. He has stirred their minds against me. Oh! my grief. He has used me to bring men lower yet, so that they will live in viler dwellings, and eat of fouler food, and be more meanly clad, more verminous than ever. The women will be lower sluts and shrews than they have ever been, and of their children it will be hard to see how they can ever grow into men and women. Deeper and deeper into the pit has Jah brought us, and there is now no hope."

And in his agony he remembered how in his childhood he had been taught to pray to Jah, and he knelt and prayed that he might come face to face

with Jah, to tell Him what He had done, and to implore Him to make an end of His cruelty and to destroy all at once.

Hearing him pray Mr. Nicodemus fled from his side and left him alone with the Widow Martin. Said she:

"Don't take on so, dearie. A man's no call to take on so when he has a woman by his side. There's nothing else in the nature of things, but men and women only. If we starve, we starve: and if we die, we die, it's all one. Have done, I say, there's always room for a bit o' fun."

"Fun!" cried Mr. Bly.

And the comfortable creature took his head to her bosom, and there he sobbed out his grief.

XVI: ON THE ROAD

So the strike ended, and Nicholas Bly walked from town to town marking its effects. It was as he had foreseen, and men were lower than before, and every night he prayed that he might meet Jah to curse Him to His face. For days on end he would utter never a word, but the widow Martin stayed with him and saw that he ate and drank, stealing, begging, wheedling, selling herself to get him food. She would say:

"It's not like Mr. Nicodemus. There's very little fun in him, but a woman doesn't care for fun when she's sorry for a man."

He was a grim sight now, was Nicholas Bly. His ragged clothes hung and flapped on him as on a scarecrow. His cheeks were sunken and patched with a dirty grey stubble. His eyes glared feverishly out of red sockets, and they seemed to see nothing but to be asking for a sight of something. There was a sort of film on them, but the light in the man shone through it. His shoulders were bowed and his thin arms hung limply by his side, but always his face was upturned, and he shook as he walked, like a flame.

The malady in him drove him to the heights. His desire was to be near the sky. Presently he forsook the towns and went from one range of hills to another seeking the highest in Fatland.

At last after many days he reached the highest hill, and there he lay flat on his face and would neither eat nor drink. By his side sat the widow Martin, and she made certain that he was going to die, and produced two pennies to lay upon his eyelids when death should come.

On the third day he turned over on his back and said:

"Jah is coming."

And it was so.

Up the steep path came a man with a great beard and a huge nose and eyes that twinkled with the light of merriment and shone with the tenderness of irony, and blazed with the fire of genius. By his side walked a slim dark figure, and with a joyful cry the widow Martin declared it to be Mr. Nicodemus.

Nicholas Bly sat up and began to rehearse all the curses that in his bitterness he had prepared.

XVII: JAH

He began:

"By the dead bodies of the children of men; by the plagues and diseases of the bodies of women; by the festering ——"

Very quietly Jah took His seat by his side and motioned to Mr. Nicodemus to take up his position in front of them. In a voice of the most musical sweetness and with a rich full diction He said:

"As we made the ascent I was expostulating with my friend here for the absurdity of his attempt to reinstate himself in the world. There is no Hell. Neither is there a Heaven. These places live by faith as we have done. It is a little difficult for us to understand, but we have no occasion for resentment. Separately it is impossible for us to understand. My meeting with my dark friend here led

me a little way on the road towards a solution. The four of us may arrive at something."

The widow Martin scanned Jah closely:

"You've been a fine man in your time."

"I have never been a man," replied Jah sadly. "Nor have I been able to play my part in human affairs. Like my friend here I have been an exile. I have been forced to dwell in the mists of superstition, even as he has been confined in the dark depths of lust. Until now I never understood our interdependence. I am the imagination of man. He is man's passion. Together we can bring about the release of love in his soul. Separately we can do nothing to break his folly, his stupidity, his brutality, his vain selfishness. Without us he can be inquisitive and clever, vigorous and energetic, but he remains insensible, unjust, cruel and cowardly."

And Nicholas Bly roused himself and he seemed to grow, and the film fell from his eyes and he cried:

"Blessed be Jah, blessed be Nicodemus, blessed be man and the heart of man, blessed be woman and the love of woman, blessed be life, blessed be death!"

So saying he rose to his feet. Before his face the sun was sinking in the evening glory: behind him the moon rose.

XVIII: JAH SPEAKS

A GREAT wind blew through Nicholas Bly's hair and he bowed his head in acceptance of the wonder of the universe.

As the moon rose to her zenith Jah said:

"There are Wonders beyond me and God is beyond imagination. My dwelling is in the mind of men, but I have been driven therefrom. My friend here should dwell in the heart of man, but he has been unseated. Together we should win for man his due share of the world's dominion and power, and should be his sweetest stops in the instrument of life. For without us is no joy, and with us joy is fierce. I speak of the woman also, for she is the equal of man and his comrade."

And as the moon was sinking to the west Jah said:

"We have suffered too long, and we have brought forth nothing. Let us no longer be separate, but let us, man, woman, God and Devil, join together to bring forth joy, for until there is joy on earth there shall not be justice, nor kindness, nor understanding, nor any good thing. We are but one spirit, for the spirit is one, and none but the undivided spirit can see the light of the sun."

Even as he spoke the sun came up in his majesty, dwarfing the mighty hills, and Nicholas Bly raised

his head and saw Nicodemus in the likeness of a lusty young man, fine and splendid in his desire, and Jah in the shape of a winged boy. And as he saw them they disappeared, and he said:

"They have vanished into the air."

From the scarred hillside came an echo:

"Into the air."

XIX: SONG

THEN did Nicholas Bly sing:

"I have lived, I have loved, I have died,
And my spirit has burned like a flame;
In the furnace of life my soul has been tried,
I have dwindled to ashes of shame.

I have glowed to the winds of my own desire,
I have flickered and flared and roared,
Through the endless night has flashed my delight
To declare my joy in the Lord.

For the Lord is life and I am His,
And His are my shame and my pride.
My song is His: my Lord sings this:
I have lived, I have loved, I have died."

XX: MORNING

WAKING, the woman said:

"How is it with you, my man?"

He answered:

"I feel truly that I am a man."

Gazing upon the woman, he saw that she was beautiful.

XXI: HOPE

THEY came down from the hills, and a mist descended upon them, and presently a driving rain. They were glad of each other, and smiled their joy upon all whom they met. Nicholas Bly never ceased to make songs, and as he sang the woman laughed merrily. The songs he made he sang to many men, but none would listen except the drunken man in the public-houses.

One day a very drunken man asked Nicholas Bly to sing a song again, and he refused, because he wished to sing a better song. The man offered him a mug of beer to sing again, but he refused, saying:

"I do not sing for hire."

The man despised him and drank the beer himself, saying:

"It's a silly kind of sod will sing for nothing."

And he would hear no more.

So it was everywhere. None could understand that Nicholas Bly should sing for the delight of it or that there could be a joy to set him singing. In the end, and that soon, his heart broke and he died, and Fatland is as it is.

Mr. Nicodemus and Jah were never seen again, nor in Fatland is there trace or memory of them.

But within the womb of the woman was the child of her man, so that she gazed in upon herself with a great hope. In this she was so absorbed that the insensibility of the Fattish moved her not at all and she forgot to apply for her maternity benefit.

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